



City of St. Louis

**Department of Parks
Recreation & Forestry**



**Parks and Open Space Plan
Volume 1:
Parks and Open Space Plan**

December 2004



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Table of Contents

Section I—Introduction	1-1
Section II—Plan Background	1-7
Section III—Parks and Open Space Plan	1-23
Section IV—Plan Implementation	1-87



Parks and Open Space Plan

Section I—Introduction

The St. Louis parks system is steeped in heritage and tradition. At the earliest stages of city development in the late 1700's and early 1800's, public officials and citizens alike understood the value of a strong park system to the economic, social, and environmental well being of the city.

In 1907, the first St. Louis City Plan remarked that city parks played an important role in quality of life for city residents and parks should be distributed throughout the city. The 1907 plan also championed the benefits of parkways and linkages to parks. Subsequent city master plans extolled the virtues of a park system for city residents. However in the decades following World War II, planning efforts began to recognize the deteriorating nature of the city and eventually that of the park system.

In 1993, a region-wide movement undertook the challenges of restoring the city's Forest Park to its former glory. In many ways, the successes at Forest Park have led to this city-wide parks plan. This plan is intended to reestablish a community priority to improve the St. Louis park system, increase pedestrian connections between parks and neighborhoods, and protect and enhance open spaces and the natural environment throughout the city.

Plan Purpose

Through the efforts of many city officials, business leaders, and civic and neighborhood leaders, St. Louis is experiencing a renewed, collective sense of civic pride and optimism for the future. The opportunity is rising to reclaim the national stature that St. Louis once held through an integrated set of strategies for city development.

The last "official" comprehensive plan for St. Louis was completed in 1947, more than 50 years ago. New development strategies are needed for a new time. That new time is the city's future from today, at the centennial of the height of the City's glory displayed at the 1904 World's Fair and Exposition.

Strategic redevelopment of St. Louis is the focus of the recently completed St. Louis Strategic Land Use Plan. The St. Louis Parks and Open Space Plan was prepared using the Strategic Land Use Plan as a springboard for development of strategies to enhance the quality of life for residents and workers in the city. The plan, sponsored by the St. Louis Parks Department, Great Rivers Greenway District and the St. Louis Planning and Urban Design Agency, will guide decisions on the city parks system, city and regional greenways and bike trails, streetscape aesthetics, and enhancement and restoration of the natural environment.



The overall goal of the St. Louis Parks and Open Space Plan is to "*enhance the quality of life for all St. Louisans.*" This goal can only be accomplished through a firm understanding of the needs of the community and the application of achievable strategies to address those needs.

Plan Process

The St. Louis Parks and Open Space Plan was created through a process of evaluation, collaboration, and validation. The City of St. Louis Parks Department, the Great Rivers Greenway District and the St. Louis Planning and Urban Design Agency collaborated on funding and setting the plan direction. The planning process included the following tasks:

- Inventory and condition assessment of all city parks and facilities.
- Analysis of existing open spaces and proposed regional greenway and trail systems.
- Analysis of city-wide demographics.
- Benchmarking and analysis of Best Practices from peer cities.
- Coordination with the City of St. Louis Strategic Land Use Plan.
- Meetings with neighborhood representatives, Aldermen, Stakeholders, St. Louis City staff, and City officials.
- A city-wide Parks Summit.
- Creation of a city-wide Parks Concept Plan.
- Preparation of plan recommendations for parks, open space and greenway linkages.
- Identification of potential funding opportunities.
- Identification of responsible parties to implement plan recommendations.

This plan was based on the needs expressed by the community, city officials and stakeholders. These needs, as expressed in numerous meetings, focused on the provision of a "high standard of quality" throughout the park system. In response, the plan places a high priority on the elevation of maintenance standards, safety, security and accessibility of the St. Louis park system.



Plan Contents

The St. Louis Parks and Open Space Plan process included the assessment of the community, parks and park facilities, recommendations for park, open space, greenway and trail linkages, and natural resource restoration. Section II provides a summary of background reports on the City of St. Louis and its park system. Full reports on Community Assessment, Recreation Centers Assessment, Ecological Assessment, Peer Assessment, and Parks Assessment are in St. Louis Parks and Open Space Plan, Volumes 2 and 3 of this plan. Needs Assessment (or public input) is incorporated in Section II of this report in its entirety. The St. Louis Parks and Open Space Plan in this document (Volume 1) is outlined below:

- **Plan Background**—This introductory section summarizes the six “assessment” reports.
- **Master Plan**—This section provides the direction for the City of St. Louis Parks Department and

partners in their collaborative journey to enhance the quality of life for St. Louisans. This direction is framed by Plan Themes, Plan Principles, Plan Actions, and Plan Implementation.

- **Plan Themes**—Reflect the ultimate goals the master plan strives to achieve.
- **Plan Principles**—Address key challenges and opportunities and lay the foundation for Plan Actions.
- **Plan Actions**—Provide specific actions for improvement of the city’s parks and open space system.
- **Plan Implementation**—This final section identifies potential funding options to implement the Plan Actions. Plan Actions are prioritized and City or partnering agencies responsibilities for plan implementation are identified.



Figure 1: Planning Process

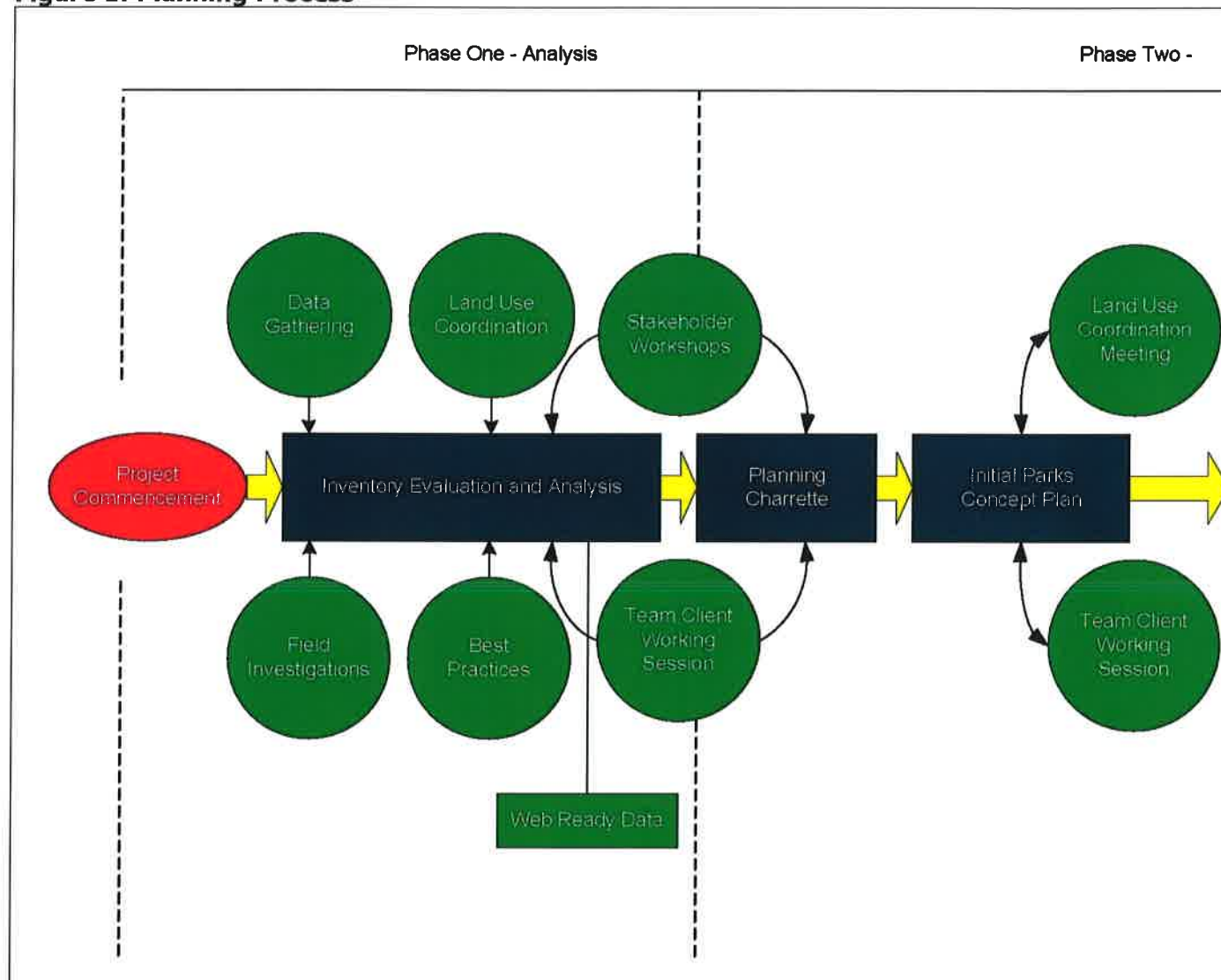
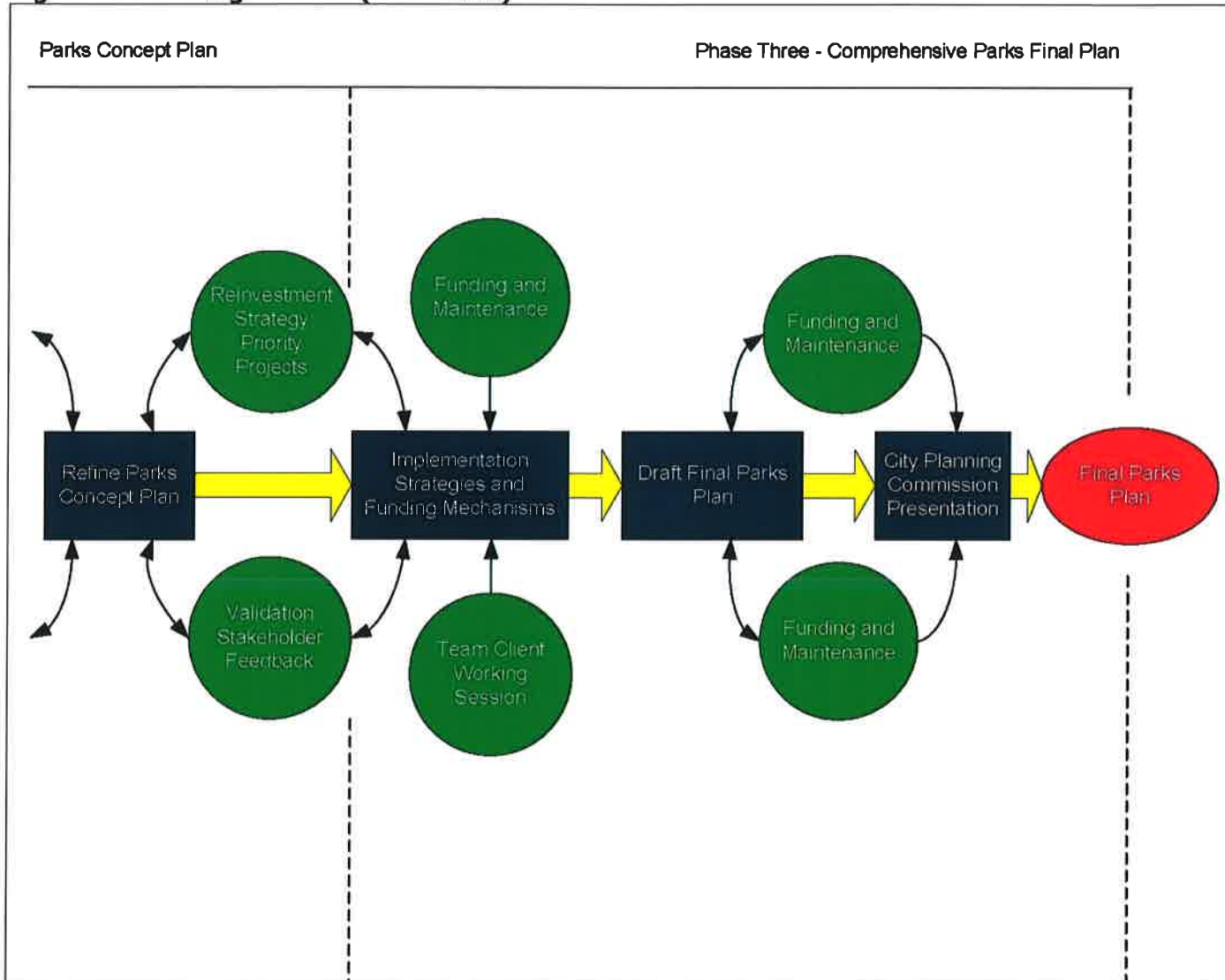


Figure 1: Planning Process (Continued)





Section II—Plan Background

The following Plan Background section is a summary of six "Assessment" reports that collectively provide a snapshot of St. Louis and its park system, through park planning history and demographics, inventories of the park system and recreation centers, identification of ecological management practices, evaluation of benchmarks and parks "best practices" from peer cities, and results of the public engagement process. The background reports summarized in this section include:

- Community Assessment
- Recreation Centers Assessment
- Ecological Assessment
- Peer Assessment
- Needs Assessment
- Parks Assessment

Community Assessment

The following conclusions, or observations, have been drawn from the Community Assessment Report to aid in the preparation of the Parks and Open Space Plan for the City of St. Louis. The full Community Assessment Report is in Volume 2. Results of the Community Assessment were instrumental in understanding St. Louis and developing the plan's Themes, Principles and Actions.

- The Parks Division of the St. Louis Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department is responsible for the care of the City's "formal" park system. A vast and diverse network of public-private partnerships oversees the region's "informal" greenways and open space systems.

- Park planning and implementation in St. Louis since the 1940s has focused primarily on improvements to recreation programs, existing parks, and the service delivery system, as opposed to expanding the park system.
- Recent emphasis has been placed on creating a regional system of interconnected parks and greenways/trails and on major capital improvement planning for the City's largest parks.
- Demographics portray St. Louis as a City that is:
 1. Stabilizing in population after a period of rapid growth followed by a period of rapid decline. More recent declines generally have been concentrated in north St. Louis; however, the region does not anticipate any further major shifts in the population over the next 20 years.
 2. Aging faster than the US as a whole with the only real growth in the past 10 years in ages 40 to 49.
 3. Racially segregated with a high concentration of African-Americans in north St. Louis, Whites in the southwest City, and a growing Foreign Born population in the southeast City.
 4. Poorer than the US as a whole with a poverty rate that is double the national average and represented throughout most of the City; though a higher concentration of poverty exists in north St. Louis and smaller portions of the southeast City.



5. Relatively dense in its residential land use, averaging more than 22 persons for every acre of "residential" land in the City. However, as urban cities go, St. Louis is considered a medium-density city.
 6. Stagnant in its jobs growth and burdened with an unemployment rate almost double the national rate.
- Over the City's history, residential uses have moved away from the Mississippi River as industry, commerce, and the search for a suburban lifestyle made downtown living uninviting. Recent efforts to repopulate the CBD and surrounding neighborhoods through formerly industrial/commercial loft conversions and infill housing is providing an alternative housing choice to the region. City living is becoming fashionable again.
 - St. Louis has a solid foundation of public and private open space, cultural resources, greenways and trails, and community gardens on which to build a park, greenways, and open space network, providing equal access to each City resident.
 - The City's formal park system generally meets recognized benchmarks for the proper geographic distribution and amount of public parkland by park type (Regional, Community, Neighborhood, and Mini Parks). Primary needs of the system are for increased Community Park-level amenities and for enhanced facilities and grounds maintenance Citywide.

Parks Assessment

An inventory and condition assessment of the City's 105 parks, 10 Recreation Centers, and more than 100 park buildings and structures was conducted to establish an "order of magnitude" cost for the basic restoration of the City's park system. **This cost does not include additional enhancements planned as a result of Master Plans prepared for the City's largest parks.** The full Parks Assessment Report can be found in Volume 3 of the Parks and Open Space Plan.

The study was performed to assess deferred maintenance items, site deficiencies for buildings and specified aboveground park infrastructure facilities, and heating, ventilating, air conditioning (HVAC), plumbing, and electrical issues for buildings.

Areas not included in detail within the study, but which were noted, included cosmetic deficiencies for buildings, building code/life-safety issues for buildings, accessibility issues for buildings, structural/seismic issues for buildings, and environmental issues (asbestos and lead-based paint) for buildings.

Parks

The study included 105 parks in the City of St. Louis that are maintained by the City Parks Department. There are 5 additional parks that are not maintained by the City Parks Department. These five parks are also referenced in the study.



Buildings

The study included 10 "Recreation Centers", 69 "Comfort Stations" (and buildings that include "comfort station" facilities), and 34 "Other" buildings (buildings that are not "Recreation Centers", or "Comfort Stations").

Summary of Costs

All "order of magnitude" costs were provided in 2004 dollars. The costs can be trended forward for inflation, for budgetary purposes, to the time period when the construction work is planned.

Parks

The "order of magnitude" cost to complete the deferred maintenance needs of the aboveground site related items of the City parks is approximately \$40,000,000.

Buildings

- **"Recreation Center" Buildings:** The "order of magnitude" cost to update the recognized deficiencies in the "Recreation Center" buildings is approximately \$20,000,000 (excluding seismic retrofit costs).
- **"Comfort Stations":** The "order of magnitude" cost to update the "Comfort Stations" is approximately \$7,000,000.
- **"Other" Buildings:** The "order of magnitude" cost to update the recognized deficiencies in the "Other" buildings is approximately \$4,000,000.

Total

The "order of magnitude" cost (in 2004 dollars) to provide basic deferred maintenance on the aboveground infrastructure and amenities at City parks, the "Recreation Center" buildings, the "Comfort Stations", and the "Other" buildings is approximately \$70,000,000.

In addition to these deferred maintenance costs, this Plan and Park Master Plans specifically prepared for Carondelet Park, Compton Hill Reservoir Park, Forest Park, Fox Park, Lafayette Square, St. Marcus Park, and Tower Grove Park have estimated new construction and future capital renewal costs of \$60,000,000. And, the construction of three new "Super" recreation centers as planned by the City is estimated at \$45,000,000. With the inclusion of these projects, the grand total for parks and recreation centers improvements becomes nearly \$175 million.



Recreation Centers Assessment

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry operates and maintains ten recreation centers distributed throughout the City. These centers were built over a seventy-three year period between 1897 and 1970, and vary in size from approximately 1,500 square feet (SF) to 86,560 SF. The types and diversity of programs offered at these facilities is typically related more to the size and location of the individual center, rather than its age. Clearly, however, the age of these facilities provides an indication of their generally outmoded design and obsolete systems, features that can dramatically reduce the overall functionality of each building. Similarly, as these structures have aged, the annual costs for maintenance and systems operation continues to increase.

The City's development of recreation centers during roughly the first half of the Twentieth Century correlated fairly well with its rapidly expanding population. For example, between 1897 and 1950, the period in which the City's first six centers came on line, the population of St. Louis grew by 281,558 people, to 856,796. From 1950 to 1970, the beginning of a substantial decline in population, the City added three more centers to its roster.

Since its population peak in 1950, the City has lost more than 508,000 residents and has a current estimated population of 348,000.

The loss of population that began in the latter half of the 1950s started a movement toward neighborhood decline and abandonment that became increasingly prevalent by the mid 1960s and has generally

continued to this date. However, over the last twenty years there has been an emerging trend toward new housing construction by private investors in several portions of the City that previously had been largely abandoned. This reinvestment of both private and public funds is generating renewed hope and interest in city neighborhoods and city living. Most recently, this trend has been recognized and supported in City-wide planning efforts which targeted specific areas of the City for neighborhood restoration and/or redevelopment. This designation implies that new and rehabilitated housing will be supported by quality public services and programs.

The City's ability to provide new or enhanced levels of service is, of course, limited almost entirely by shrinking municipal revenues. Recognizing that aging and obsolete recreation centers can drastically limit the City's ability to provide the types of services that are increasingly demanded by those choosing an urban lifestyle, the City must determine how it can best provide those services if it is to continue attracting new residents.

In recognition of these various issues, an analysis was conducted (see Volume 2) to examine the characteristics of each of the City's ten existing recreation centers and to provide recommendations regarding their future use. Future possibilities may include modernization of specific facilities and upgrading the programs they offer, permanent closure of other facilities, and/or formation of partnerships with non-public entities to provide services.

The following recommendations are provided for the Parks and Open Space Plan for the City of St. Louis. They are intended to guide the Department of Parks,



Recreation and Forestry in the establishment of a recreation center program that will service the needs of St. Louis' youth, adult and senior population, both now and well into the future. Those recommendations are:

- Continue to develop the three-tiered recreational system as generally outlined in the "Blueprint for Youth Recreation" and discussed below, but adjusted to accommodate the recreational needs of all residents of the City of St. Louis, not just youth.
- The first-tier of a City-wide recreation center program consists of three new user fee-based Super Centers that should, as currently envisioned, be developed in the southern, west central and northern portions of the City. These locations will provide an equitable distribution of services throughout St. Louis. These new facilities will become components of the toolbox that is used to support city-wide strategies to stabilize and redevelop neighborhoods.
- Second-tier facilities, the so called Community or Multi-Purpose Centers, focus on the City's ten existing recreational centers that were the primary subject of the analysis. In that regard, the scenario in Table 1 is recommended for these facilities:

Table 1: Recreation Center Strategy

Action	Long-Term:		Short-Term:		Near-Term: Close/ Relocate to New Service Area ³
	Retain/Remodel ¹		Retain/ Replace ²		
Recreation Centers	■ Wohl	■ Gamble	■ Cherokee		
	■ Marquette	■ Tandy	■ West End		
	■ 12th and Park	■ Buder	■ Parkside		
			■ Soulard		

¹**Long-Term: Retain/Remodel**—Centers falling within this action category are in generally good condition, have a relatively strong user base, and are of adequate size and configuration. These centers are generally well suited to meet existing and/or anticipated near-term increases in adjacent neighborhood populations. It is recommended that they be retained and remodeled as necessary in order to continue to provide high quality recreational services for both current and future area residents. These facilities will be retained and maintained for the extent of their useful and productive life which is conservatively estimated to be approximately twenty years.

²**Short-Term: Retain/Replace**—This action category addresses those facilities that are generally older and of somewhat outmoded design and configuration. Nevertheless, these are facilities that are considered to be in good condition and have a remaining useful life of perhaps ten years. Beyond that time frame, these centers will need replacement. Given current planning and development efforts that are currently being directed toward the neighborhoods served by these centers, replacement facilities should be sited in close proximity to the existing buildings.

³**Near-Term: Close/Relocate to New Service Area**—Recreation centers listed in this category are slated for closure because of severe deficiencies associated with size, inappropriate design, age, or the presence of a substantial duplication of services that is currently provided by other city recreation centers. Centers named within this category should be closed at the earliest possible opportunity. However, closure of these facilities should not occur until financing is available for new replacement facilities and the new centers should be built in those portions of the City that are currently under served.



- As a third-tier of this program, the City should begin to define and negotiate a public private partnership that will ultimately provide the highest levels of recreational participation and satisfaction for City residents of all age groups. The "Blueprint for Youth Recreation" identified approximately 120 public and private facilities within the City that currently provide some form of recreational programming for youth. This does not include the City's ten existing recreation centers. A similar tabulation should be undertaken to identify recreational providers for adults and senior citizens.

Among the providers of youth services are Caring Communities Centers, Community Education Centers, nonprofit recreation facilities, Catholic Youth Council programs, and St. Louis Public School facilities. Again, according to "Blueprint" researchers, approximately 90 of these facilities/programs would be considered Neighborhood Centers, 18 would be classified as Multi-purpose Centers, and two, the Matthews-Dickey Boys Club and the Herbert Hoover Boys and Girls Club, would be considered Super Centers. By negotiating a public use program with some of the providers noted above, the City could easily expand services to underserved portions of the community, provide services not typically found within the City's community center program, and generally enhance the overall quality and availability of recreational services.



Ecological Assessment

There are a number of ecological management best practices that are applicable to the parks in the City of St. Louis. These range from the very basic to the complex. The principle behind ecological management best practices is to protect, enhance, restore and manage natural habitats within our park systems for use by wildlife and the enjoyment of all people. The result of implementing ecological management best practices is improved environmental quality, reduced long term maintenance costs for parks and increased opportunities for open space enjoyment. Providing habitat diversity through ecological management best practices allows parks departments to offer a broader range of recreational opportunities to a broader range of individuals.

Through the Citywide Parks Plan, research was conducted for the City of St. Louis Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department to "benchmark" the City's park system against other urban park systems and to identify "ecological best practices" for consideration. The benchmarking process assessed what other communities were doing, and the applicability to the St. Louis parks system.

Ecological Management Best Practices described later in Section III of the Plan include:

- **Sustainable Design**
- **Stream Restoration and Daylighting**
- **Wetlands Restoration and Mitigation**
- **Storm Water Non-Structural Management, Infiltration-Based Management, and Erosion Control**
- **Forest Inventory, Restoration, Invasive Species Control, Enhancement, and Tree City USA Participation**
- **Grassland Inventory, Invasive Species Control, Restoration and Enhancement**
- **Habitat Protection**



Peer Assessment

For the Parks and Open Space Plan, research was conducted to “benchmark” the City’s park system against comparable urban systems and to identify “best practices” for consideration (see Volume 2). The benchmarking process assessed the physical attributes of comparable park systems and the revenue and expenditure implications of providing such systems. The best practices approach looked at park systems’ organizational structure, financing, maintenance procedures, and planning. Examples were provided from other cities that examine, among other issues, parks, open space, and boulevard systems. For the most part, these best practices were incorporated into the plan’s Principles and Actions.

Benchmarking Park Systems

Based primarily on the Urban Land Institutes’ (ULI) *Inside City Parks* published in 2000, the City of St. Louis park system was compared to 24 of the largest urban park systems in the United States. For a more accurate comparison of like park systems, these cities were categorized by population density as high, medium, and low. City densities ranged from 40.5 persons per acre in New York City to 2.2 persons per acre in Kansas City, Missouri. At 8.8 persons per acre, St. Louis fell near the middle of the medium density cities.

Benchmarking was done for a series of categories related to park assets, revenue and expenditures. Observations from this exercise provide a better contextual understanding of the St. Louis park system, providing opportunities for encouragement

as well as for improvement. Some important observations are described below:

City Park Information

- The amount of municipal park acreage (parks owned or operated by the municipality within the city boundaries) as a percent of the City is near the middle of all cities surveyed at 8.1% vs. 8.8% for all cities. At 8.8%, the City of St. Louis would need to add 300 acres of parkland. Among medium density cities, the average is 10.0%.
- The amount of municipal park acreage per 1,000 residents in the City is 9.2 acres compared to the average of cities surveyed of 11.1 acres. At 11.1 acres per 1,000 residents, the City would need to add 675 acres. Among medium density cities, the average is 11.5 acres.
- The number of neighborhood (non-regional) parks per 100,000 residents in St. Louis (99 parks) is 28.4 compared to the average of cities surveyed of 24.6. By comparison, the City has 13 more non-regional parks than all the surveyed cities, but 12 parks less than the cities in the medium density category.
- The number of recreation centers in the St. Louis (10) is 2.9 per 100,000 residents. The average of all cities is 46 recreation centers or 4.5 centers per 100,000 residents with 260 centers in Chicago leading the way; the average of medium density cities is 24, or 5.1 centers per 100,000 residents, with 50 recreation centers in Minneapolis. At 4.5 centers, the City of St. Louis would have 16 centers.



- The City has 162 sports fields (46.5 per 100,000 residents)—Baseball (23), Field Hockey (1), Football/Rugby (6), Multipurpose (1), Soccer (39), and Softball (92). This compares to an average of 299 sports fields (34 fields per 100,000 residents) for all the cities surveyed and 204 fields (45 fields per 100,000 residents) for the medium density cities, led by Minneapolis' nearly 400 fields. St. Louis exceeds the average fields per 100,000 residents of the medium density cities by 5 sports fields.
- Bikeways/greenways under the responsibility of the St. Louis Parks Department equal 30 miles. By comparison, the average mileage provided by all other surveyed cities is 43 miles and for medium density cities is 41 miles. Portland leads medium density cities with 105 miles. With an average of 10 miles per 100,000 residents of bikeways/greenways provided by the medium density cities' parks departments, the St. Louis Parks Department would need to provide an additional 5 miles of bikeways or greenways. (The St. Louis bikeway system also includes existing on-street bike trails covering 5 miles on Broadway, Russell, Grand, and Holly Hills; 19 miles of bike routes currently being established through Bike St. Louis; and an additional one mile of conceptual bikeways.)
- The St. Louis Parks Department has approximately 215 full-time employees in Parks, Recreation, and Forestry (parks-related activities only), or 62 per 100,000 residents. This is slightly higher than the 58 employees per 100,000 residents for the average of all cities surveyed, but exactly equal to the number of

employees per municipal park acre of the surveyed cities.

- The number of volunteers serving the St. Louis park system was not readily available. However, for benchmarking purposes, the average city surveyed listed approximately 5,000 volunteers per year and the average medium density city (excluding St. Louis and Detroit) listed an average of 2,500 volunteers.

Park Revenue and Expenditures

- The total revenue/expenditure per resident dedicated to the St. Louis Parks Department is \$52 at \$18,000,000. This compares to \$66 per resident for all cities surveyed. At \$66 per resident, the Parks Department would have \$23,000,000 in total annual revenue and expenditures.
- On average nationwide, the percent of revenue from the General Fund is 50% of total revenue and the percent of revenue from User Fees is 10%. The balance of revenue is from dedicated taxes (10%), private donations (1%), state and federal support (7%), and capital income (23%). Funding sources for the St. Louis Parks Department are 68% from the General Fund, 26% from Dedicated Taxes (e.g., MPRD and City sales taxes), 3% from Fees, and 3% from Federal CDBG funds. Eight of the 25 surveyed cities have a dedicated tax for parks. Opportunities in St. Louis may exist to increase the amount of Fee income and for a Bond Issue to increase Capital income.



Needs Assessment

Public Engagement Process

As the consulting team developed a plan that reflected the concerns, issues and visions of St. Louis' residents, including varied perspectives for the Citywide Parks and Open Space Plan was a major goal of the public engagement process. Three distinct audiences—the general public and neighborhood leaders; parks and open space experts; and aldermen—were invited to participate during the planning process. Table 2 provides a summary of the goals of engagement for each distinct audience.

Throughout the planning process, several qualitative and quantitative measures were used to collect information from each audience. From a qualitative standpoint, the consulting team conducted small group discussions during neighborhood conversations and the City-wide Parks Summit. Quantitatively, the team administered a survey at the Summit's conclusion to confirm the comments heard during the small group discussions. Additionally, the team sent an open-ended questionnaire to members of the City of St. Louis Board of Aldermen.

Engagement Highlights

On a scale of 1 to 4 with one being excellent, respondents rated the condition of parks between good and fair (2.7 out of a possible 4.0). Three percent stated the parks were excellent, 44% stated the overall condition was good, 33% stated the parks were fair, and 20% stated the parks were poor.

When asked what elements comprised an excellent park system, the following comments were culled from the various audiences and events. An excellent park system is one that:

Establishes standards to:

- Insure greenspace for every "x" acres (especially directed to developers)
- Insure that neighborhoods have greenspace within "x" miles

Creates an infrastructure that has:

- Adequate funding for on-going maintenance and repairs (to provide complete and equitable coverage)
- Public information or relations to notify residents about activities
- Regular coordinated events to draw residents into parks

Involves the community through:

- Volunteerism
 - Park ambassadors
 - Friends group
 - Advisory board
- Partnerships (private, public and governmental)

Insures diversity through:

- Niche parks serving different interests
- Ecology
- Historically relevant parks reflecting the respective neighborhoods



Table 2: Summary of the Goals of Engagement

Audiences	Number of Engagement Meetings	Goals of Engagement
<i>Stakeholder Advisory Committee—20 Parks, Open Space, Recreation, and Community Experts</i>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Secure feedback regarding development, implementation and funding strategies ■ Build local and regional support for future funding and partnering
<i>City of St. Louis Aldermanic Board</i>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Secure feedback and direction ■ Create an environment for future support ■ Provide information for discussions with residents
<i>Neighborhood Leaders and St. Louis Residents</i>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Neighborhood Conversations—Phase 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Solicit consumer-based feedback regarding park usage and satisfaction ■ Generate ideas regarding park renovation and upgrades ■ Generate user-based strategies for supporting parks and partnering with Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry ■ Provide guidance to the technical team for testing best practices at the Summit ■ Summit on Parks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Explain the need for parks planning and public involvement ■ Inspire residents to create and support an exemplary park system ■ Neighborhood Conversations—Phase 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Test support for various strategies and best practices



Educates with:

- An internship program to teach people how to maintain parks
- An education program to work with local schools

In addition to commenting about the system, residents at both the neighborhood conversations and the Parks Summit were asked to describe the positive and negative attributes of specific parks.

Positively, residents prefer parks that are:

- Accessible by vehicular and pedestrian traffic
- Open, yet provide a diverse blend of plantings
- Well-maintained
- Creative with public art, fountains and statues
- Equipped with well-maintained ball fields and playgrounds
- Centrally located to schools and neighborhoods
- Used and supported by the surrounding community and neighborhoods
- Safe, with abundant lighting
- Highlighted by historical markers and statues
- Accessible to panoramic views of the city and the river
- Peaceful with ponds and walking gardens
- Free from vehicular traffic and parking

Negatively, residents did not look at the positive attributes and reverse them. They were specific to state that they didn't like parks that were:

- Poorly maintained (landscape and structures)
- Lacked amenities and activities
- Lacked interesting landscape design
- Unsafe

When asked what mechanisms should be employed to assist the Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry with funding and support, respondents mentioned the following mechanisms.

- Develop a "friends program" for each park
- Engage residents around specific park improvements and partner around projects
- Create a parks endowment fund for hardscape amenities (benches, markers and comfort stations)
- Develop partnerships with corporations, private educational institutions, and faith based institutions
- Increase elected officials support
- Develop new programming and charge user fees
- Seek additional funding through local, state and federal grants
- Add concession stands at regional parks and charge fees
- Create parks tax that is tied to tourism amenities (hotel, transit and restaurants)
- Create a parks referendum to fund improvements and continual maintenance

With the information provided during the first round of neighborhood conversations and the Summit, a needs assessment survey was created and administered to over 100 residents. The survey included questions regarding park enhancements, common outdoor leisure activities, park spending and park funding.



Survey Results

Park Enhancements

The following enhancements are desired: park walking paths, playgrounds, trail connections to neighborhoods, and nature trails. Table 3 provides a summary for all park enhancements. Although residents indicated that they enjoyed festivals, bandstands, a requisite feature if music is played at a festival, was ranked lowest. Since residents were asked to rate the most important enhancement as "1", those with the lowest rating are the most important.

Table 3: Summary of Park Enhancements

Park Enhancement	Rating
Walking Path within the Park	1.53
Trail Connections to Neighborhoods	1.60
Playgrounds	1.60
Nature Trails within the Park	1.81
Scenic Picnic Areas	1.88
Ball Fields	2.03
Water Features	2.09
Historical Markers	2.35
Water Parks	2.59
Decorative Entry Gates	2.71
Extreme Sports	2.72
Bandstands	2.87

Outdoor Leisure Activities

For the respondents of the survey the top outdoor leisure activities represented by at least 50% of the residents are cycling, walking, picnicking, and festivals. Table 4 indicates the percent of participants who selected a particular outdoor activity. Additionally, when asked to select the top four activities that they would participate in more if the Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry provided additional facilities or programming, residents responded with the same top activities—cycling, walking, picnicking, visiting nature parks, and festivals.

Table 4: Percent of Participants

Activity	% Participants Responding
Walking	85
Bicycling	71
Picnics	70
Festivals	63
Visiting Nature Parks	49
Swimming	47
Hiking	39
Running	35
Boating/Canoeing	34
Tennis	30
Fishing	25
In-Line/Roller Skating	25



Park Spending and Funding

If given \$100 to spend, respondents stated that they would spend:

- \$41 on restoring and maintaining the existing city parks and structures
- \$25 on developing trails and connections
- \$23 on building new park structures in existing parks
- \$11 on purchasing and developing new parks

The results of this query parallel the responses provided during the small group discussions where residents were more concerned with the conditions of the current park system. In essence, improving the current park system is more important than expanding the park system.

With respect to funding, the most desirable strategy is park adoption with a rating of 1.97; the least desirable option is a tourism tax with a rating of 2.68. Table 5 indicates the responses to funding strategies suggested during the neighborhood conversations.

Table 5: Park Funding Strategy Responses

Park Funding Strategy	Rating	Very Desirable	Somewhat Desirable	Neutral	Somewhat Undesirable	Very Undesirable
Adopt-A-Park	1.97	50.5%	15.8%	24.2%	5.3%	4.2%
Concession Stands	2.18	34.7%	32.6%	17.9%	7.4%	7.4%
Citywide Fundraising	2.26	33.7%	30.5%	20.0%	7.4%	8.4%
Park Tax	2.63	28.4%	20.0%	26.3%	10.5%	14.7%
User Fees	2.65	27.4%	18.9%	28.4%	11.6%	13.7%
Tourism Tax	2.68	27.4%	25.3%	17.9%	10.5%	18.9%



Testing Planning Themes

After completing about 80% of the engagement activities, the consulting team developed eight themes to describe the public's opinions regarding St. Louis' city parks. The themes, as indicated below, are guiding the consulting team in recommending strategies for improving the system of parks and open space.

- Quality
- Safety
- Stewardship
- Balance
- Nature
- Value
- Heritage
- Connectivity

To validate earlier public responses and to determine the theme's importance, the consulting team asked residents to rank the themes at the final round of neighborhood conversations. For residents, quality, safety and stewardship were the three most important themes. Table 6 indicates the value given to each theme. Since residents were asked to rate the most important theme as "1", the themes with the lowest rating are the most important.

The St. Louis Parks and Open Space Plan was prepared around these eight (8) dominant Themes, organized in Section III of the Plan based on their perceived public value.

Table 6: Planning Theme Value

Theme	Rating
Quality	48
Safety	61
Stewardship	80
Balance	88
Nature	90
Value	97
Heritage	105
Connectivity	114





Section III—Parks and Open Space Plan

One hundred years ago, Forest Park was the world's destination and a symbol of St. Louis' greatness. Much has changed since then, but St. Louis' parks remain vital to the livability of the city and important symbols of its vitality. Based on its wealth of assets, rich history and landmark facilities, the St. Louis park system is poised to once again become one of the greatest in the nation. However, compared to its peer regions and evident in many parks' physical conditions, St. Louis lags in maintenance and operations funding. Although this is a significant challenge in 2004, it is not unreasonable to pursue an ambitious plan, creating a legacy for the community worthy of following that of 1904.

Implementation of the Parks and Open Space Plan for the City of St. Louis will restore the City's park system to serve residents' needs in the 21st Century with safe, clean and secure facilities, convenient pedestrian access, and an appreciation for the system's natural and cultural heritage.

To meet this challenge of reestablishing a great park system, the planning process examined big picture issues, or Principles, then focused on a variety of specific actions to address the larger issues. The plan begins with a presentation of the overall Master Plan Themes that emerged through the planning process, then presents Plan Principles that form the foundation of the action plan. Plan Actions will implement the Master Plan. Master Plan Themes were created through a planning process that included regular meetings with City Parks staff,

representatives of the Great Rivers Greenway District, St. Louis Planning and Urban Design Agency, stakeholders, and the general public.

Plan Themes

Quality—City residents identified maintenance (both deferred and preventative) of existing parks as a high priority for the St. Louis Parks Department. The intent of this theme is to focus St. Louis Parks Department resources on maintenance functions that will meet the needs and expectations for all parks in the city.

Safety—Improve real and perceived safety and security in parks through coordination with the city police department, maintenance/improvement of parks, and community involvement. City police and park rangers can increase their presence in and around parks and become involved in the planning and design of parks and recreation facilities. Improved maintenance will reduce the perception of an unsafe park, as will community involvement through neighborhood/park watch programs.

Stewardship—Develop a strong "support" system through a variety of mechanisms that will improve existing parks and recreation facilities and ensure a higher standard for the future. The support system will ensure adequate funding, increase partnership opportunities with both private business and public/non-profit organizations, and build community involvement.



Balance—Ensure the equitable distribution of parks and recreation facilities throughout the city and allow for flexibility to accommodate future changes in city development and cultural diversity. City residents should have the opportunity to walk or bike a reasonable distance to neighborhood or community parks and recreation facilities.

Nature—Enhance the natural environment within the city and the relationship of these natural systems to the regional landscape. The “greening” of St. Louis goes beyond city parks, it should include wetlands, public and private open space, community gardens and green infrastructure.

Value—Enhance the park system’s role in city-wide economic development and growing economic wealth for city residents. Parks enhance the property values of residences and are an important quality of life factor that affects household and business location decisions. Parks should be “marketed” as an important part of the regional economic development strategy.

Heritage—Celebrate the rich history of the St. Louis park system and the historic relationship between parks and neighborhoods. A system wide evaluation of cultural resources in the park system will provide an in-depth knowledge of park history and a deeper understanding of the historic assets in parks. The relationship of parks and neighborhoods can be celebrated through special events and partnerships with neighborhood associations and public organizations. Celebrating the relationship between parks and neighborhoods is a springboard to community involvement.

Connectivity—Connect parks, schools, and cultural institutions with a network of greenway trails and bike routes serving neighborhoods and business districts. This will provide an alternative to the use of automobiles and encourage healthier lifestyles. In a hierarchical greenway/bike route system, greenway trails will provide linkages to larger parks, institutions and regional trails. Signed bike routes will provide better access to neighborhood parks, community parks, schools, and greenway trails.



Plan Theme: Quality

Increase the standards of maintenance within city parks to meet the expectations of residents, business leaders, and city officials.

The physical condition of the city parks has significant influence on the perceived level of benefit of the assets to the residents, as well as their actual enjoyment of those facilities. The quality of the park facilities is impacted by the design and materials used in construction, but to a greater degree by the proper operation and maintenance of the facilities. In addition to addressing current operations and maintenance, it is essential to address the backlog of deferred maintenance and future capital renewal requirements. The primary focus should be on the effective use of funding resources to address all areas of maintenance requirements.

Plan Principles

- **Align portfolio assets with Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department goals and objectives. Review portfolio and identify any assets appropriate for disposition (sale, exchange or donation).** Minimize asset holdings that are inconsistent with departmental goals and objectives. This supports the best utilization of operating and maintenance funds. This is further discussed in the Balance Theme.
- **Identify a comprehensive view of all funding (both capital and expense) requirements to address current operations and maintenance, as well as future capital**

renewal and prior deferred maintenance.

These three funding areas (current operations and maintenance, deferred maintenance and future capital renewal) are inter-related and must be collectively addressed. Current maintenance that is postponed increases the backlog of deferred maintenance and contributes to an accelerated rate of facility deterioration. Proper budgeting for future capital renewal avoids the failure of building systems that impact the current maintenance requirements as emergency replacements.

A Capital Planning and Management System (CPMS), based on a thorough Facility Condition Assessment, can assist in prioritization of current maintenance requirements, project future capital renewal, and establish a prioritized program to address the deferred maintenance backlog for buildings and grounds.

A comprehensive view and reporting of the funding requirements enables the strategic facilities issues to be accurately communicated. Postponement of necessary maintenance and repairs contributes to even greater funding needs in the future. Substantially more funds are required to correct the "accumulated problems" of a rapidly deteriorating portfolio.

- **Exercise use of available management tools and procedures to optimize use of labor resources and to prioritize maintenance work.** The Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department's assets are a portfolio of diverse and geographically dispersed facilities. Deployment of the Department's resources, both physical tools and manpower, is a complex issue.



Available planning, scheduling and management tools can assist in effective use of resources.

- **Utilize construction materials and equipment with a greater expected life cycle to reduce maintenance requirements and improve duration of use.** As with other sustainable design initiatives, the choice of materials or equipment used in construction has a significant impact on the environmental impact of ongoing maintenance requirements.

Plan Actions

Base-Line Funding: Establish a base-line funding level for ongoing (current) maintenance based on similar industry standards. Standards in similar industries recommend a funding level for current maintenance equal to 1.5-2.5% of the current replacement value of the total portfolio assets.

Define Maintenance Backlog: Implement a Capital Planning and Management System solution to define the organization's deferred maintenance backlog and future capital renewal projections.

Address Maintenance Backlog: Develop a specific program over a defined period (10 years) to address the deferred maintenance backlog. Addressing deferred maintenance requires a separate dedicated effort in funding and allocation of labor resources. The time period for this program should be as aggressive as possible, as further physical deterioration of the facilities will occur at an accelerated rate.

Parks

- **Park Facilities:** In the short term, the Parks Department should develop a prioritized repair/replacement schedule for those facilities which have exceeded their usable life. Independent of long range facility maintenance strategies, these replacements are essential to the public's use of the parks.

Buildings

- **Recreation Center Buildings:** Prioritize and fund deferred maintenance and building code/life-safety improvements at the City's recreation centers. Based on the Parks and Recreation Centers Assessment Report, the City should prioritize recreation centers and building deficiencies for deferred maintenance and future capital renewal funding.
- **Comfort Stations:** Develop a strategy for comfort station maintenance/replacement. The Parks Department should consider whether parks with multiple "Comfort Stations" will be upgraded and made accessible or should some of the "Comfort Stations" be closed. The Parks Department should consider whether some of the larger "Comfort Stations" that need to be upgraded can be replaced by new smaller, seasonal "Comfort Stations"—since the cost may be less.
- **"Other" Buildings:** For lower priority/higher renovation cost buildings, the Parks Department should consider deferring the upgrade work on some buildings.



Capital Renewal: Develop future year budgetary requirements to include projected capital renewal requirements. All building system components have a limited life cycle. Life cycle cost modeling should be used in conjunction with Facility Condition Assessments to project when major building system components (roofs, chillers, etc.) will reach the end of their expected useful life cycle and require replacement. Annual capital renewal expenditures are typically 1.5-2.0% of the current replacement value of the total portfolio assets.

Preventative Maintenance: Implement a preventive maintenance program through an industry standard Computerized Maintenance Management System. Experiences in other industries have indicated that implementation of Computerized Maintenance Management Systems (CMMS) can improve the effectiveness of the maintenance organization. These systems can assist maintenance operations through the implementation of preventive maintenance routines, improved resource (labor) allocations, work order tracking and distribution, development of equipment histories, and management of equipment warranty information.

Design Standards: Establish design and material standards for materials used in new construction to have properties of greater longevity. Specify materials of consistent type for efficiency of maintenance. Require life cycle cost analysis of alternative materials.





Plan Theme: Safety

Enhance the feeling of safety, both perceived and real, within city parks.

Safety and security in parks is both real and perceived, but both have to be addressed equally to build the public's confidence in the city park system. Safety (accidental harm) and security (criminal harm) in city parks were expressed as very important issues by the public during the public engagement process, ranking behind Quality as the second highest priority for the Parks Department to address. Maintaining high standards for safety and security within the parks are essential to the success of the park system.

Plan Principles

- **Design, build and manage safe and secure parks and recreation facilities.** A combination of practices is required when designing a park for safety and security. Crime can be reduced through thoughtful planning and design that is coordinated with the St. Louis Police Department. Take a balanced approach to crime prevention, crime reduction and increased real and perceived safety through design standards that encompass items such as lighting, playgrounds, walkways, trees, parking lots, trails, and access points.
- **Increase communications and presence in the parks system.** Safety in parks can be enhanced through increased communications between the public and the city and between city departments. Residents will feel a greater sense

of safety and responsibility when they are aware that city employees are increasingly visible in parks and have responsibility for ensuring public safety.

- **Develop partnerships that encourage involvement in maintaining safe parks.** Partnerships with local law enforcement, neighborhoods, businesses, and community organizations will generate public awareness, support and assistance in park safety to supplement the City's resources to ensure a safe park system.

Plan Actions

Safety in Design: Incorporate safety and security design elements during the planning and design/re-design process. Encourage the St. Louis Police Department to participate in the planning and design process. Design elements that should be incorporated into park planning for new parks or park improvements include, but are not limited to:

Layout

- Site restrooms and/or portable toilets in the vicinity of high activity areas or entrances to encourage ease of surveillance.
- Create active edges that can increase park accessibility to users who may feel more vulnerable in the park interior, and take advantage of existing streetlights.
- Have entrances that are easily seen and highly visible to promote casual use by passersby.



- Ensure clear lines of sight to playgrounds, fields, courts, and other park amenities by reducing manmade structures—walls, fences, and sheds—as well as bushes and other vegetation that block views.
- Ensure that trails have destination points of higher visibility and do not dead end.
- Integrate pedestrian circulation from surrounding neighborhood.
- Maintain primary access routes that are clearly identifiable.

Signage

- Place signs and trail markers at entryways, activity areas, and intersections of paths and trails; these signs should have information on the park and trail layout and indications of where patrons are in relationship to the layout (e.g., "You Are Here").

Lighting

- Illuminate pedestrian and vehicular routes, recreation facilities, and activity areas.
- Position or direct lights so they extend beyond the edge of paths and illuminate concealment areas.
- Use a hierarchy of types of lights and intensities where appropriate.
- Use lights in coordination with signage to assist pedestrians.

Park Watch: Work with the St. Louis Police Department and neighborhood associations to develop a "neighborhood/park watch" program. Enhance the long established neighborhood watch program to provide additional emphasis on adopted parks.

Crime Watch: Encourage the St. Louis Police Department to record and maintain crime statistics for each park area. Currently, the St. Louis Police Department records crimes in parks by a nearby street address. The department should revise their method of recording crime locations to actually record the park name where the crime occurs so focused crime prevention actions can be conducted at parks with higher crime rates.

Park Ranger Patrols: Increase the number of park rangers and enhance training. Currently, 25 park rangers patrol St. Louis city parks. This number should be increased to provide an increased public safety presence, particularly in parks with higher crime rates. Park rangers should receive a higher level of training and authority (some may require local or State authorization) so the rangers can provide a broader range of patrol duties.

Volunteer Patrols: Expand volunteer patrol programs for greenway/bike routes and parks. The volunteer patrol program is currently limited to North Riverfront Park. As the city bike route system and greenway systems grow, the St. Louis Parks Department can coordinate the expansion of the park and bike patrol program. This program should include adults and teens as volunteer bike and park patrol members. Because most greenway and bike routes will link to city parks, volunteer bike patrol members will be another "set of eyes" on the parks.



Park Cleanup: Organize a neighborhood park cleanup program. Although a clean park is directly associated with the quality of a park, a clean park also helps provide a sense of security and inhibits poor behavior. Volunteers should be organized to clean up parks on a regular basis. Volunteers can be members of a neighborhood/park watch program, local school children, boys and girls clubs, a service organization, or simply an individual who wants to be of service to the community.

Uniformed Staff: Provide "uniforms" to maintenance personnel to increase the exposure of park employees. Because park maintenance personnel are in parks throughout the day, they should wear a highly visible and distinguishable uniform (or simply a brightly colored T-shirt) to make clear a constant city presence in parks. This will encourage park visitors to notify maintenance personnel about criminal behavior in parks or maintenance issues that have not yet been noticed by city employees.

Emergency Communications (Park Staff): Provide maintenance personnel with communication devices and training on how to report criminal behavior or emergencies. Maintenance supervisors currently have two-way radios; however, the maintenance staff does not have an efficient method of communicating with public safety officers. Distributing communications devices will result in faster communication and shorter response times for park rangers or law enforcement officers.

Emergency Communications (Public): Install emergency call telephones in larger parks and parks with high crime rates. There are no emergency call telephones in the St. Louis parks system. These "emergency only" telephones should be conveniently located and highly visible. They can be located in both active use areas and passive use areas.





Plan Theme: Stewardship

Ensure a higher standard of parks maintenance and amenities through strategic partnerships and community involvement.

Plan Principle

- **Create partnerships for the stewardship of individual parks and recreation facilities and the entire parks system.** Partnerships are vital to establishing a great park system. A shared vision should be developed between the St. Louis Parks Department and partners. Partners will develop measurable outcomes to demonstrate the effectiveness of the partnership to both partners. Stewardship partnerships can involve space costs, staff costs, marketing dollars, support services, maintenance, and equipment use. The value of partnerships might also include:
 - Money, staff, equipment, facilities, and transportation;
 - A philosophy for pricing of services;
 - A process for training and educating staff, part-time employees, and volunteers;
 - An evaluation system used by an agency; or
 - Effective marketing and communication measures.

Plan Actions

Partnership Options: The city should develop several types of partnerships as the situation suggests, to include:

- **Investment Partnerships:** Share financially in developing a community-use facility.
- **Event Partnerships:** Create and manage a special event.
- **Contractual Partnerships:** Contract to manage a department, program or facility.
- **Non-Profit Partnerships:** Another agency provides a program service.
- **Inter-Agency Partnerships:** Departments within the city share equipment and staff.
- **Product Partnerships:** Partners provide in-kind products in lieu of cash.
- **City/School Partnerships:** Partners share indoor and outdoor facilities.
- **Sponsorship Partnerships:** Partners provide cash for program enhancements.

Parks and Schools: St. Louis Public Schools, Saint Louis University, Harris Stowe College, St. Louis Community College, Washington University, Webster University and other educational institutions should be partners in programs/events and in the use of their facilities and grounds. Partnership types and agreements can include the following:

- Share the planning, design, use, and capital costs of recreation facilities, both indoor and outdoor, such as pools, community-use spaces, and outdoor game fields. (Specific recommendations for partnerships leading to the establishment of mini parks at local schools are provided under Plan Theme: Balance.)



- Develop a planning and scheduling priority for uses at either partner's facility. Neither party should charge for fixed (indirect) or direct costs associated with facility use. Examples of indirect costs are heating and air conditioning costs. Examples of direct costs could include facility rental fees or staff to assist in facility operations.
- When funds are leveraged, a better overall facility can be provided to the community—at a reduced cost—compared to costs for constructing, operating, and maintaining two separate facilities. Other leveraging examples include jointly purchasing quality equipment that both parties use; or cross-promoting to the same users to save on mailing and distribution costs.
- Students and faculty from Saint Louis University, Harris Stowe College, St. Louis Community College, Washington University, Webster University and city schools can be involved in inventorying and restoring natural and cultural resources, monitoring resources, and managing resources. Natural areas that have been protected, restored and enhanced can become outdoor classrooms for use by faculty and students.

Parks and Businesses: Partner with businesses and civic organizations for sponsorships, naming rights, and/or funding. Potential partners include some of the many large local corporations and business organizations such as Civic Progress that participate in community improvement activities.

Partnering with businesses should not, however, be limited to large corporations. Countless opportunities to develop partnerships exist with small businesses

that have connections to recreation and outdoor activities.

Parks and Developers: Partner with developers to adopt parks adjacent to new or redeveloped residential or commercial project sites. Developers are potential partners to fund neighborhood park clean-up programs and youth and adult volunteer patrols.

Parks and Not-For-Profits: Partner with local not-for-profit organizations, (as well as State and local agencies) for enhanced programming, shared use of facilities, and shared expertise. Examples of public/not-for-profit partnerships include:

- Youth or adult sport associations (e.g., YMCA, Mathews-Dickey Boys' & Girls' Club, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts).
- Hospitals (e.g., BJC Hospital, Forest Park Hospital, Saint Louis University Medical Center).
- Environmental associations or organizations (e.g., Missouri Botanical Garden, Nature Conservancy, Audubon Society, Forest ReLeaf of Missouri).
- The St. Louis Parks Department has worked with and should continue to partner with, among others, local agencies such as the city's Planning and Urban Design Agency, Great Rivers Greenway District, Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District, State agencies such as the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and Federal agencies such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Park Service, the U.S.



Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Volunteer Office: Create and staff a volunteer office within the St. Louis Parks Department. Operating the volunteer office would include developing a "Volunteer Corps" to organize the park clean-up program, coordinate Adopt-a-Park and Adopt-a-Trail programs, and the volunteer patrol program. The volunteer office staff also accomplishes a number of other tasks that include:

- Matching volunteer requests to sites.
- Developing volunteer job descriptions and a volunteer resource manual for staff.
- Training staff.
- Coordinating the tracking/reporting of volunteer hours.
- Providing on-site coordination, training, and recruiting of volunteers for special events.
- Working with non-profit partners.
- Visiting area schools to promote a youth volunteer program.
- Actively recruiting and exposing new groups/organizations to the St. Louis Parks Volunteer Corps.
- Leading a department-wide committee related to the volunteer program.
- Consultation, assistance, and guidance in meeting specific volunteer needs.

Friends of Parks: Develop a comprehensive "Friends of Parks" program. Friends of Parks should be formed to provide an active advocacy group and to lead fund-raising campaigns for the park system. The Friends of Parks program should be implemented at various levels of involvement ranging from maintenance of public art and cultural resources to raising funds for an individual park or for the entire park system. Examples might include:

- Friends of Tandy Park
- Friends of Public Art
- Friends of St. Louis Parks

Parks Board: Establish a Parks Commission or Parks Board. Establish a board or commission to provide long-range guidance for the St. Louis Parks Department's facilities and programs.

Cooperation Agreements: Increase cooperation with City departments and other local parks departments. Cooperation between City departments and other local parks departments could reduce operational costs through, among other things, the sharing of maintenance equipment and staff, or mutual aid agreements for public safety or large event manning situations.





Plan Theme: Balance

Provide city residents the opportunity to be outdoors to relax or play. Create a balance of neighborhood parks, community parks, special use areas and recreation centers that enhances the quality of life for residents and workers in the city.

The St. Louis parks system has been developing for nearly 200 years. More than 10 years before the City's actual incorporation in 1823, Gravois Park, Laclede Park and Mt. Pleasant Park were dedicated as the area's first parks in 1812 and later deeded to the city through ordinances. Since that time the system has grown to 105 City parks covering 2,700 acres, plus nearly 500 acres in parkland owned or managed by other entities.

More than 1,600 acres, or sixty percent of the current City park system, were in place within 18 City parks by the turn of the last century. With a population of less than 80,000, there was plenty of parkland to go around at 20 acres per resident. Between 1900 and 1950, as the City's population mushroomed to over 850,000, 43 parks totaling nearly 900 acres were added to the park system. Even so, this provided a total of only 3 acres per 1,000 residents. From 1950 to 2000, an additional 44 parks comprising about 200 acres were added to the system while the population declined to 350,000. Today, the City park system provides approximately 8 acres per 1,000 residents, a great improvement over the 1950 ratio of 3 acres and near the average of the 25 largest cities across America.

The St. Louis City parks system includes eight "regional parks" containing most of the City's park acreage. Most parks (97 of the 105) in St. Louis are smaller neighborhood or mini parks. These smaller parks serve as the backbone to the entire park system, scattered throughout the city encouraging frequent visits.

The larger regional parks were originally planned to be day-long destinations, sited quite a distance from the city and requiring considerable time for residents to reach. The distance from the city provided visitors the opportunity to escape urban living for fresh air and relaxation. Many things have changed in our culture since those days, including the desire to relax or play close to our homes. A pleasant walk to the park encourages a more active lifestyle, benefiting residents in health and social activity.

The residents of St. Louis are well served by the current park system. A few areas exist in the city where residents can not readily walk to a park. By contrast, other areas have multiple opportunities for residents to walk a short distance to any one of several parks. Creative solutions need to be considered to fill gaps in park access since most areas of the city are densely developed. These solutions will include a combination of partnerships, development at multi-function parks, and land acquisition.

Although land acquisition should not be a high priority for the St. Louis Parks Department, strategic land acquisitions will meet the future needs for a balanced system of parks, increase the length and connectivity of greenways, and increase the acreage of open space throughout the city. Land acquisition does not have to require land purchase by the Parks



Department; however, it does require an organized approach of identifying land needs, locations, and acquisition strategies, and building partnerships for implementation.

Plan Principles

- **All city residents should be within 1/2 mile (or about six city blocks) of a park providing neighborhood park and recreation amenities.** While most city residents have the benefit of living within a reasonable distance from a city park, there are areas within the city where residents are more likely to drive to a park because of distance. The ideal park system would provide a park within 1/2 mile (or approximately six city blocks) of every city resident. However since St. Louis has been “built-out” for many decades, and there are no opportunities for physical growth of the city, a creative approach will be required to fill in the gaps in service. Population decreases over the past 50 years have resulted in numerous vacant parcels in the city and neighborhoods that lack adequate quality of life amenities. While access is one measure of a park systems quality, the type and quality of amenities that residents enjoy while at parks is equally important.
- **Neighborhood and community parks acreage should meet the average of the 25 largest cities.** The gap in park acreage between the St. Louis park system and the cities used as benchmarks is relatively small (300 to 675 acres). The population of St. Louis is projected to increase over the next 10-20 years, however recent projections expect only a modest increase over that period. Increases in the number of

downtown residents and anticipation of a greater population increase due to concentrated efforts to redevelop city neighborhoods will result in a decline in the ratio of park acreage to city population unless additional park acreage is added to the system.

- **Parkland acquisition should support the Parks Department’s parks, recreation, and open space mission.** Land acquired by the St. Louis Parks Department should strike a balance between active recreational parks and facilities and passive open space to offer programs and experiences that can be enjoyed by all residents of the city. The long-term acquisition of land by the Parks Department should not be based simply on availability of land or a willing donor. Land acquisition should be based on critical factors such as need, gaps in service, new residential developments, or key links in a greenway system.
- **Parkland acquisition should be balanced with the financial needs of perpetual maintenance.** The Parks Department should weigh the annual maintenance cost for any property or object considered for acquisition or receipt by donation. This maintenance cost should then be the basis for the conditions of donation/acquisition, establishment of maintenance partnerships, or cost covered in lease agreements.



- **Monitor and be flexible with the parks and recreation system to adjust to changing user needs over time.** As times change, so will trends in recreation and the demographic makeup of neighborhood character. These may include changes in ethnic diversity, changes in the age groups living within the neighborhood, or simply a change in the number of residents living in those neighborhoods. As an example, the area in the vicinity of Gravois Avenue and Morganford Road has experienced an increase in population of residents that were born in another country and emigrated to St. Louis. These factors influence the desires of the community for the types of recreation amenities provided in parks.
- **Develop a three-tiered recreational center system of Super Centers, Community Centers, and Outplaced Services.** The City of St. Louis conducted a study in 1997 that established a "Blueprint for Youth Recreation". One of the key recommendations from this study was the establishment of a three-tiered recreation facility system that would offer a network of off-site, outplacement partnerships offering specific facilities and programming, community multi-purpose centers that would offer a broader range of facilities and expanded programming, and super centers that would offer a full range of athletic and recreational activities. This concept should be implemented to meet the needs of not just youth, but the entire range of residents, as the population of the city grows and the diversity of the city's population changes over the next few decades.

Plan Actions

Plan Actions in this section are organized under the following recommended actions:

- Park Standards
- Park Improvements
- Park Expansions
- New City Parks
- Park Divesting
- Recreation Centers

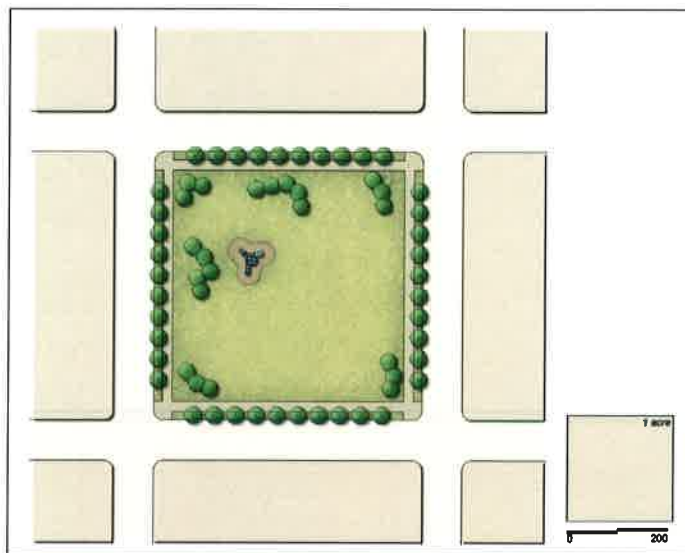
Park Standards

Typical Elements: Establish "minimum" or "typical" elements of a park that can be standardized for each park category. For example, each park designated as a neighborhood park should, at a minimum, contain amenities essential to serving its role in the City's park system. Standard elements for each park category are described below:



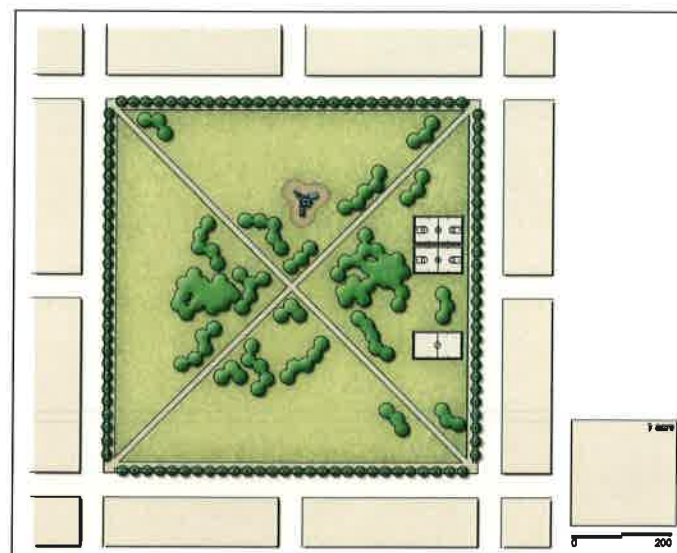
■ Mini Park:

- Benches
- Landscaping
- Public common area
- Optional uses for Mini Parks could include dog parks, a setting for public art, a tot lot or community garden.



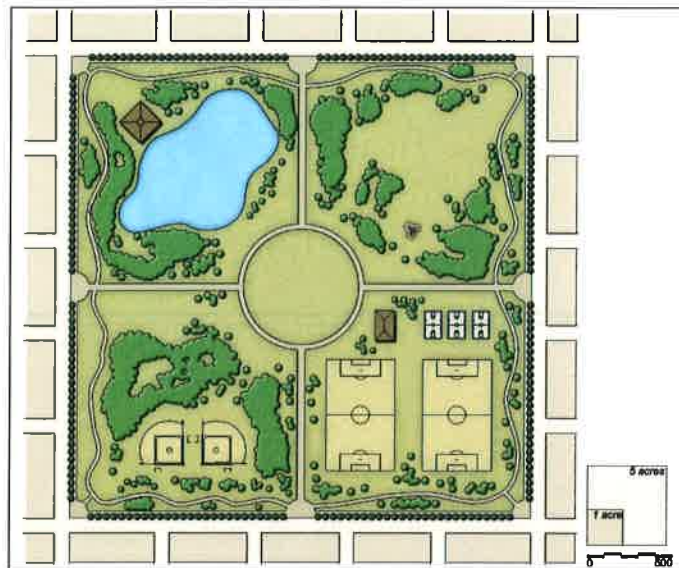
■ Neighborhood Park:

- Multi-purpose hard court
- Playground
- Picnic tables (no BBQ pit or pavilion)
- Passive open space
- Seasonal comfort stations (no permanent comfort stations)



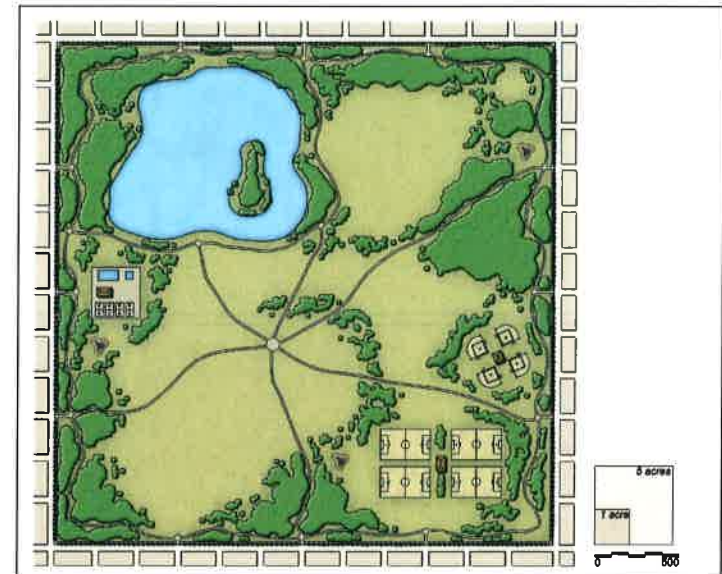
■ Community Park:

- Programmed athletic fields (lighted)
- Tennis courts
- Walking/jogging trail (bicycles will be limited to internal roadway)
- Playground
- Picnic facilities
- Comfort stations
- Water features
- Spray park



■ Regional Park:

- Large-scale athletic fields (sports complex)
- Extensive passive areas (Natural Area Program)
- Optional uses at Regional Parks could include recreation centers, swimming pools, extreme sports (skate park, BMX, etc.) and an internal cycling trail.



Reclassify Parks: Revise classifications of certain parks based on size, visitor use and park amenities. Several parks are located in neighborhoods that have seen a significant loss of population and the condition of the park amenities have become degraded by age and lack of maintenance. In other cases parks are isolated with minimal street frontage, or are in areas where the future development pattern may result in a lower residential population. Classifications for all parks in the St. Louis park system were reviewed with the following parks recommended to be reclassified:

- **Father Filpiac Park**—Revise classification from Mini Park to Neighborhood Park. Although this Columbus Square Neighborhood park is on separate parcels of land, it has neighborhood park amenities and at 4.3 acres is larger than many existing neighborhood parks.



- **Sister Marie Charles Park**—Revise classification from Mini Park to Special Use Area. This Carondelet Neighborhood park, located east of the riverfront railroad tracks and adjacent to the Mississippi River south of downtown, is isolated from residential neighborhoods. A pedestrian connection between Bellerive Park and Sister Marie Charles Park should be developed. This park should be utilized as a trailhead for the Mississippi River Riverfront Trail.



- **Dickman Park**—Revise classification from Neighborhood Park to Special Use Area. This Baden Neighborhood park has development constraints that preclude development of neighborhood park amenities; however it provides valuable non-programmed open space that could be utilized for pickup ballgames, flying kites or tossing a Frisbee.



Park Improvements

Capital Improvements: Implement park improvements that will bring parks up to the desired standards established through public engagement and parks assessments. Park improvement recommendations are based on the Parks and Facilities Assessment, recommendations for Typical Parks, and public input. The proposed park improvements are provided in the St. Louis City Park

Improvement Table in Volume 2 - Plan Assessment Report.

Funding Park Improvements: Establish a **Payment-in-Lieu-Of Ordinance (PLO)**. The City of St. Louis should adopt an ordinance that allows the City to work with developers to either incorporate parks or open space into developments, or to make a payment to the City in lieu of providing parks or open space. Payment-in-Lieu-Of fees should be based on the projected population of new residential developments and would be utilized for new parks or improvements to existing parks within the service area of the development.

Park Clusters: Create a "Park Cluster" in areas where a number of small parks result in overlapping service areas. There are several areas in the city where a number of small neighborhood parks are located in close proximity. This proximity results in overlapping service areas that create an opportunity to develop a variety of different park experiences within walking distance. This concept would enhance park experiences and minimize redundancies in park facilities.

These "expanded" parks should be considered as one integrated park unit during the park master planning process. The park cluster concept should include development of streetscape improvements that link each park with a coordinated design of the pedestrian environment to create the feeling of a neighborhood within a park.



The park cluster areas include:

■ **West End/Visitation Park Cluster:**

- Parkland Park
- Giles Park
- Porter Park
- Amherst Park
- Perry Park

■ **The Gate District Cluster:**

- Terry Park
- Compton Hill Reservoir Park
- Eads Park (in cooperation with the St. Louis Public Schools)
- Buder Park
- Tambo Park

■ **Benton Park Cluster:**

- Freemont Park
- Benton Park
- Carnegie Playground
- Cherokee Park

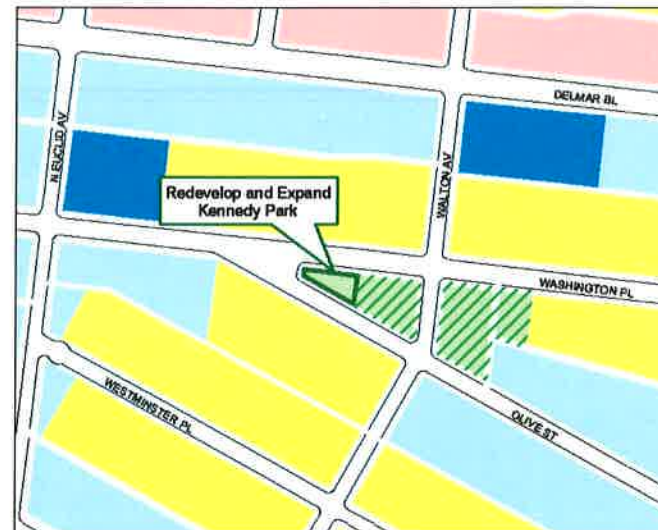
■ **Dutchtown/Mount Pleasant Cluster:**

- Laclede Park
- Marquette Park
- Minniewood Park
- Mount Pleasant Park

Park Expansions

Strategic Land Use Parks: Implement the recommendations for Recreational and Open Space Preservation and Development Areas (ROSPDA). The City's strategic land use planning process identified parcels that should be added to existing park sites. Parks where adjacent properties should be acquired are in the Central West End, North Riverfront, Old North St. Louis, LaSalle, JeffVanderLou, Vandeventer, Patch and Riverview Neighborhoods.

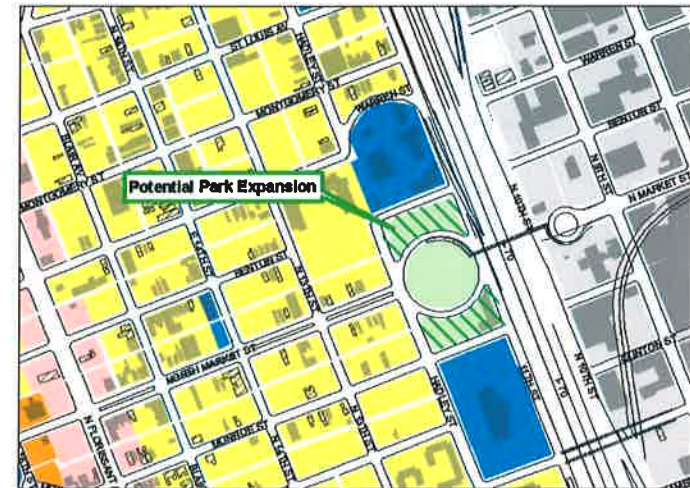
- **Kennedy Park:** Kennedy Park is currently a very small park in the Central West End Neighborhood that lacks park amenities. The City should work with a potential developer to reshape or redevelop Kennedy Park in conjunction with neighborhood redevelopment.



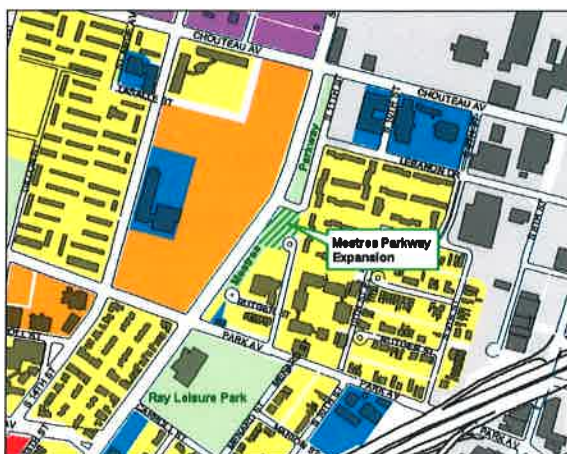
- **O'Fallon Park.** Expand O'Fallon Park through acquisition of three parcels at the northwest corner of the park.



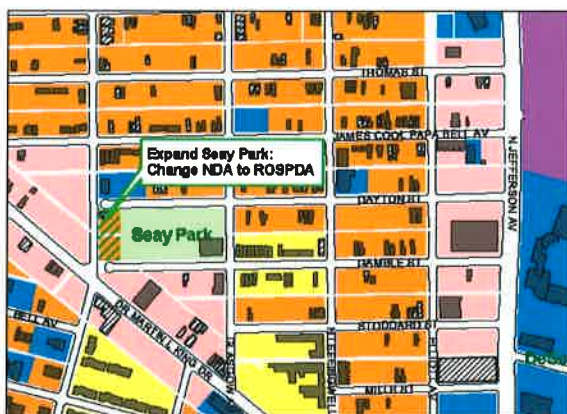
- **Jackson Place Park.** Expand Jackson Place Park in the Old North St. Louis Neighborhood through acquisition of parcels of land to the north and south of the existing park.



- **Mestres Parkway.** Expand Mestres Parkway in the Lasalle Neighborhood by acquiring a 0.7 acre parcel that would physically connect the north and south ends of the linear park.



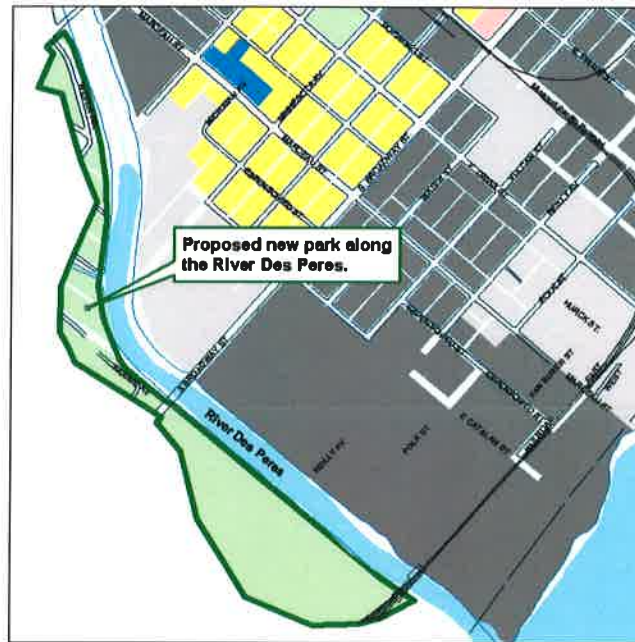
- **Seay Park.** Expand Seay Park in the JeffVanderLou Neighborhood through the acquisition of parcels on the west side of Seay Park.



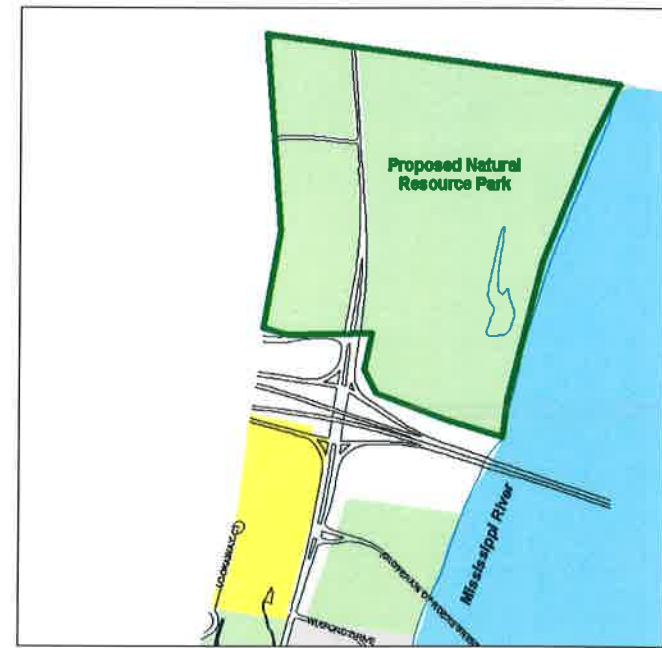
- **Acquire property to create a new park next to Stevens Middle School and Turner Playground.** Acquisition of these parcels would result in a new park extending east from Stevens Middle School to North Vandeventer Avenue, between Finney and C.D. Banks Avenues in the Vandeventer Neighborhood. This new park would connect to Turner Playground.



- Develop a new riverfront park along the south side of River Des Peres in the vicinity of Broadway. This park should be primarily passive open space and trailhead associated with the River Des Peres Greenway.



- Develop a new passive riverfront park north and south of the I-270/Riverview Drive interchange. The St. Louis Parks Department should partner with the Great Rivers Greenway District, Audubon Society and other appropriate organizations to establish a natural resource park along the Mississippi River.



New City Parks

Filling Gaps: Expand the St. Louis Park system to maximize access to city parks. Several areas in the city lack reasonable access to parks. New parks should be established in those areas through a combination of working with developers and partnerships with the St. Louis Public Schools.

- **Create Parks in Redevelopment Areas:** As neighborhoods are redeveloped, work with developers to provide land to establish new neighborhood parks. Parcels donated for park development should meet appropriate land acquisition criteria. The minimum acreage requirement for these parks should be one acre.
- Utilize LRA properties east of Stowe Middle School to create a new neighborhood park. This new park would fill a gap in service that extends into multiple neighborhoods. The new park would border Stowe Middle School and have street frontage on three sides. This location would provide access to a neighborhood park for residents in the underserved portions of the Hamilton Heights and Wells/Goodfellow neighborhoods. The School Board would benefit from additional park and recreation land available for daytime school activities. This area is within the Neighborhood Development Area 22-2 of the St. Louis Strategic Land Use Plan.



- Another neighborhood with a service area gap is the Mark Twain Neighborhood. A neighborhood park or mini park—depending on available land—should serve the Mark Twain neighborhood. An appropriate location would be in the Neighborhood Development Area 1-1.



- **Create School Parks:** Renegotiate with the St. Louis Public Schools to implement improvements to specific school grounds to “soften” the hardscape and add Mini Park-type amenities. This action would help fill in service area gaps, particularly in neighborhoods where large-scale redevelopment is not likely to occur. Improvements should occur at the following schools:

- Buder Elementary School
- Oak Hill Elementary School
- Long Middle School
- Kennard Classical Elementary School
- Scruggs Elementary School
- Woodward Elementary School
- Nance Sr. Elementary School

- **The “Lid”:** Construct green space on structures covering I-70 in downtown St. Louis. Implement previous recommendations for covering I-70 with decks that should be utilized as open space. This green space would enhance the connection between downtown’s Gateway Mall and the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. New green space would be an element of the expanding open space/public space along the city’s riverfront connection to the Mississippi River.

- **Shop and Play:** Incorporate a new neighborhood park in the commercial development on the east side of Kingshighway Boulevard between Chippewa Street and Delor Street. This potential park area could be located in the southern end of the Regional Commercial Area 14-1 of the St.



Louis Strategic Land Use Plan. This location is a central location in a part of the city that has few parks, which results in a large gap in park service area. This proposed park for the Bevo Mill Neighborhood should have a direct link (trailhead) to a greenway/bike trail leading from Christy Park to Tower Grove Park, encouraging development of outdoor recreation and neighborhood and greenway friendly businesses.

Acquisition Strategy: Develop and adopt a strategy for the acquisition of new parkland by the St. Louis Parks Department.

- **Acquisition Criteria:** Establish objective criteria for evaluating parcels being considered for acquisition. The St. Louis Parks Department should establish a written list of criteria to evaluate whether a potential property should be acquired. Criteria for both potential active and passive recreation sites should be created to evaluate whether the parcel would provide value to the department and meet the St. Louis Parks Department mission.

Staff should establish objective evaluation criteria and review each potential parcel. Such criteria should include the following:

- Existing and future land use/demographic patterns to ensure equitable distribution and appropriate neighboring land use
- Quality of natural resources
- Presence of cultural resources
- Potential for park/facility linkage
- Location of land

- Location and classification of existing parkland in the vicinity
- Proximity to a waterway
- Pedestrian and vehicular access
- Street frontage (at least two streets, preferably three or four streets)
- A minimum of one acre, preferably more than two acres for neighborhood parks
- Recreation value
- Multiple-use benefit
- Cost/benefit of the land acquisition
- Method of acquisition
- Urgency for land acquisition

- **Acquisition Techniques:** Use various techniques for acquiring land. A land acquisition strategy should involve several methods that include:

- Fee simple land purchases
- Land donations/gifts
- Leases
- Easements
- Partnerships
- Tax foreclosures
- Property condemnation
- Land exchanges

Park Divesting

Lease/Donate/Sell: The St. Louis Parks Department should lease, sell or donate underutilized parks to the St. Louis Public Schools or other entities. Parks that do not serve a valuable function as a park or parks that have been leased to the St. Louis Public Schools should continue to be leased, new lease agreements established, sold or donated.



- **Sell or Donate Busche Park to Bellefontaine or Calvary Cemeteries.** This 6.2 acre park is actually an island in the roadway leading into Bellefontaine and Calvary Cemeteries. This property does not serve a function within the city park system, however it does serve as an entry feature for the cemetery. Future use of this land should be encouraged to be open space.
- **Reestablish lease with the St. Louis Public Schools for J.B. Banks Park (formerly Garrison Park).** This 3.4 acre park within the new Vashon High School/Dunbar Elementary School complex in the JeffVanderLou Neighborhood was previously leased to the St. Louis Public Schools and the lease should be renewed.
- **Establish a lease/partnership agreement with the St. Louis Public Schools for Eads Park.** This park has minimal street frontage and is isolated behind residential homes that front on St. Vincent Avenue, Hodgen Elementary School, and commercial establishments along Jefferson Avenue in the Gate District Neighborhood. This park should be leased to the St. Louis Public Schools for maintenance and daytime use by Hodgen Elementary School. Public use should still be allowed during early evening hours and on weekends. The proposed expansion of Eads Park illustrated in the City of St. Louis Strategic Land Use Plan would be incorporated into this lease/partnership agreement.

Recreation Centers

Indoor Recreation: Continue to implement the strategies from the "Blueprint for Youth Recreation" and the Recreation Centers Analysis component of this park and open space plan. The major recommendations from those studies include the following:

- Construct three new recreation "Super Centers" in the southern, west central and northern portions of the city, which may be located at existing parks or recreation centers.
- Retain and remodel Wohl, Marquette and 12th and Park Recreation Centers for the extent of their functional life.
- Retain then replace Gamble, Tandy and Buder Recreation Centers over the next 10 years.
- Acquire funding and begin the process of developing four (4) new recreation centers, then begin the process of closing Cherokee, West End, Parkside and Soulard Recreation Centers.
- Develop a public/private partnership program with other public, private or non-profit organizations that provide recreational programming.





Plan Theme: Nature

Enrich the natural environment of the city by establishing a network of open spaces and protecting and restoring natural resources throughout the city.

Although St. Louis is an urbanized area with little natural habitat remaining, opportunities exist to recapture elements of nature through restoration of natural areas in parks and preservation of remaining open space. Urban parks represent one of the best opportunities for citizens to interact with nature on a regular basis. The principle of “parks as nature”, espoused in the early years of the park movement has been carried to a higher level of understanding with the environmental movement in the United States. Parks as nature no longer consists primarily of a savannah-like habitat of large stately canopy trees under-planted with grass. It now includes a comprehensive system of native habitats, protection and enhancement of ecologically sensitive areas, protection of resources, and constant inventorying and monitoring of assets within a park system. It also extends to managing those resources, and in many cases, reversing practices that are now known to have long-term detrimental impacts on the environment.

The City of St. Louis has the opportunity to become a leader in the region by applying best practices to all aspects of environmental restoration, protection, enhancement, management and partnership. This environmental stewardship can provide benefits at the local and regional levels, including educational

venues, improved environmental quality, and reduced maintenance and management costs.

Ecological management must rely on interagency cooperation, as well as cooperation between public and private agencies and non-profit organizations. Natural resources are monitored, protected and managed by a variety of local, state and federal agencies. The St. Louis Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry, has worked with and continues to have the opportunity to work with local agencies such as the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District and the Great Rivers Greenway District, State agencies such as the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and Federal agencies such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, for example, is identifying habitat restoration areas along the north St. Louis riverfront. The Parks Department should coordinate with the Corps to integrate these habitat areas into a linked system of open space.

Many of these agencies, particularly the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) have developed techniques and guidelines for sustainable environmental management. GRAND, the Great Rivers Alliance of Natural Resource Districts, consisting of the St. Louis region NRCS districts, has published guidelines for erosion control, storm water management and other sustainable practices that are recommended for the St. Louis region. In many cases these agencies have established criteria for sustainable practices.



The Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry should enlist the help of local elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, and not-for-profit organizations such as the Missouri Botanical Gardens. Students and faculty can assist in inventorying resources, restoring resources, monitoring resources and managing resources. Areas that have been protected, restored and enhanced can become outdoor classrooms for use by faculty and students.

Various not-for-profit organizations, such as the Boy Scouts, can also work closely with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry. Special interest groups, if their goals are not in conflict with the goals of the Department or the general public, can be supportive of ecological management practices of the Department. Most urban parks departments are not in a financial position to stringently monitor areas that have been restored. Enlisting the help of schools, other institutions, agencies, organizations and individuals will help to make any project a success. Working with these organizations will build a broad base of support for environmental endeavors of the Parks Department.

Environmental Management

Plan Principles

- **Develop an understanding of ecological resources within city parks.** Ecological management begins with an inventory of the resources that exist and that are available for use by a community. Not only does this include resources that already exist, but also those locations where it may be possible to restore a

resource or undo previous damage. Resource identification should extend to those areas that are prone to environmental damage, such as wetlands or former wetlands, riparian corridors, steep slopes and others. Resource inventories may be conducted by volunteer groups or by institutions and agencies other than the Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry. For example, Gateway Wildlands, a local organization promoting ecosystem restoration in the St. Louis area, organizes and conducts periodic inventories of flora and fauna in Forest Park. State and Federal natural resource agencies also have inventories that would be useful as a foundation for conducting further field investigations.

An inventory of resources should also include forest areas and lawn areas, to determine if these may be allowed to revert to a natural state. Natural habitat areas that already exist should be evaluated to determine if there are management techniques that could improve the quality of the habitat.

- **Protect, enhance, restore and manage natural habitats within the park system.** Ecological management best practices generally fall into several broad categories. These include the establishment of overall guidelines and principles to be considered, specific types of habitats to be established or improved, and guidelines on how to manage the habitats once established. Ecological management best practices also provide guidelines on how to address or mitigate areas of environmental quality concern. The results of implementing ecological management best practices are



improved environmental quality, reduced long term maintenance costs for parks, and broadened opportunities for open space enjoyment. Providing habitat diversity through best practices allows parks departments to offer a broader range of recreational opportunities to a wider range of individuals. Implementing ecological management best practices will foster a greater appreciation for the habitats that were once present throughout the St. Louis region, and a greater appreciation for practices that lead to good environmental stewardship.

As one of the largest public land managers in the City of St. Louis, the Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry can be a leader in environmental stewardship in the region. By implementing and following best environmental practices, the Parks Department can demonstrate to the citizens of the region how these work and what the benefits are to the public. Maintaining traditional park settings with vast mowed areas is unsustainable. These areas are important, but in many cases can and should be reduced.

The following environmental recommendations are ones that are easily implementable at relatively low cost. They are also recommendations that will give immediate benefits. Reducing the areas of maintained lawn will result in immediate savings of energy, equipment usage and manpower, and other maintenance costs acre for acre. This is especially important as the park system continues to grow and expand. Reducing the amount of runoff and focusing on an infiltration based system will reduce the construction costs of projects and the need for piped storm sewers,

especially for new and renovated projects. Restoring habitat areas will improve bio-diversity in the parks system and provide alternative recreation opportunities for users. Use of plants indigenous to the region will reduce the initial installation costs and long term maintenance costs. Use of indigenous species, including wildflowers, will demonstrate to homeowners in the region the attractiveness and benefits of using these plants.

Plan Actions

Design

- **Sustainable Design:** Establish and implement sustainable design principles. Ecological management must be in conformance with sustainable design principles. Sustainable design embodies principles that result in limited use of resources, protection of water and air quality, and reduced maintenance and energy usage. Short-term investment in sustainable design can result in long-term savings for maintenance, infrastructure costs, and environmental remediation.

The Parks Department should incorporate sustainable design principles in the design and operations of their parks system. There are a variety of techniques that can be incorporated. Some of the key sustainable practices that the Parks Department can use include, among others:



- Reduce the amount of hard surface pavement
- Reduce the use of curb and gutter
- Implement erosion control measures
- Reduce the amount of mowed acreage
- Restore and protect native habitats
- Bio-stabilize riparian corridors
- Reduce the amount of enclosed storm sewers in headwater areas

Streams

- **Restore Streams: Protect and restore stream corridors.** Riparian corridors of various types should be protected and restored in the park system. Waters of the U.S. are protected from adverse impacts under provisions of the Clean Water Act. These protections extend to headwater areas, and include ephemeral streams. Protecting waterways of all types can become a key component of a green infrastructure within and connecting our parks system. These corridors can become ribbons of bio-diversity that weave through and in many cases connect parks.

The Parks Department is in a position to protect these corridors and to restore those streams that have been degraded due to the impacts of urbanization. Parks departments can demonstrate bio-stabilization techniques that can be extended to reaches of the streams outside the park boundaries.

Bio-stabilization is an alternative to traditional "hard armoring" techniques for stream channel protection. It relies more on the use of vegetation rather than rock and concrete to protect stream banks. Bio-stabilization relies on restoring and using fluvial form and function in a

stream. Restoring channelized streams and creeks to a natural meander pattern and riffle and pool system reduces flooding and the "flashiness" associated with urban streams. Bio-stabilization strives to recreate natural fluvial forms and functions, and to ultimately help a stream reach a state of dynamic equilibrium.

Bio-stabilization will contribute to improved water quality, improved fluvial form and function and improved in-stream habitat. Stream corridors can become ribbons of biological diversity that weave through our parks and can help link parks to each other. Parks where protection and restoration of stream corridors should be implemented include all parks where there is a stream system, including ephemeral streams.

Stretches of the River Des Peres corridor would be suitable for stream restoration. Before a project is undertaken, it should be determined if there would be a detrimental impact to flood water conveyance. Generally, in-stream vegetation slows the rate of flood water flow, helping to reduce the "flashiness" of storm flows in an urban setting.

Parks where protection and restoration of stream corridors should be implemented and where bio-stabilization techniques can be used include:

- O'Fallon Park
- Forest Park
- Willmore Park
- River Des Peres Park
- Carondelet Park



- **Daylight Streams:** Restore streams that have been buried. Where possible, "daylight" streams that have been piped underground as part of a traditional urban storm water system. Day-lighting is a process in which the pipes are removed, and the former channel is restored to a stable, natural condition. Day-lighting is especially effective in headwater areas and at outflow areas. Stream "daylighting" projects should be conducted in certain portions of Christy Park, Forest Park and any park that includes headwater areas, among others. Daylighting and restoring headwater areas should be combined with other techniques of sustainable storm water management and environmentally sustainable design. These should become demonstration areas on effective, low-cost measures to reduce infrastructure investments in parks. Any effort to daylight streams should be coordinated with the Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources and the Missouri Department of Conservation.

Wetlands

- **Restore Wetlands:** Where appropriate, restore wetlands. Some city parks were established on bottomland along creeks, streams or rivers that was too wet to develop or farm. Restored or created wetlands can offer valuable recreation benefits, particularly for passive activities such as walking, jogging, biking and birding. In some cases boardwalks can be incorporated to help negotiate the wetter areas. Wildlife observation platforms or blinds may be incorporated as well.



Former wetlands located in bottomland areas are also easy to restore, and can become part of a riparian corridor.

Parks where wetland restoration should be implemented include, among others:

- Willmore Park
- Christy Park
- North Riverfront Park
- Forest Park
- Carondelet Park
- Tower Grove Park
- River Des Peres Park

The Missouri Department of Conservation has identified a shortage of suitable wetland habitat in the St. Louis area. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has determined that even isolated wetlands in an urban area provide valuable habitat for wildlife.



- **Wetland Mitigation:** Identify areas that are suitable for wetland mitigation efforts. Wetland mitigation is a mandated form of habitat restoration that results from the issuing of a Section 404 permit by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under the auspices of the Clean Water Act. Wetland mitigation sites are created to offset impacts to other wetland areas. Wetland mitigation sites usually have restrictions imposed on the permit. Wetland mitigation sites are created for the benefit of wildlife, and active human uses may be prohibited. Passive, low impact activities may be allowed, however. The resolution of the types of activities allowed is on a case-by-case basis, and is determined by the regulatory authority.

Storm Water

- **Non-Structural Management:** Increase the use of non-structural storm water management approaches. Non-structural storm water management provides options that should be used to reduce the reliance on and the problems associated with traditional approaches to storm water management. Site specific measures such as infiltration based design, bio-stabilization of stream banks, protection of existing riparian corridors and establishment of riparian corridors are all methods that can be used in place of or in conjunction with traditional engineering approaches to storm water management. A holistic, non-structural approach to storm water management can result in a green infrastructure that flows through and between parks. Non-structural storm management techniques have application in almost all city parks.
- **Infiltration-based Management:** Implement infiltration based storm water management. There are a number of infiltration based storm water management practices that would be applicable to most City of St. Louis parks. These include:
 - Reduce excess pavement where possible, particularly on renovation projects.
 - Eliminate or reduce curb and gutter, allowing storm water to sheet flow onto an area for infiltration, or into an infiltration swale.
 - Use of porous pavement materials.
 - Use of micro-detention and infiltration basins planted with wetland species.Infiltration based storm water management has application in almost all city parks.
- **Erosion Control:** Implement erosion and sediment control measures. If the rate and volume of storm water runoff is not controlled, it results in erosion which in turn results in increased sediment. Reducing the volume of storm water in parks by reducing impervious surfaces reduces the volume and in some cases the rate of runoff. Creating infiltration swales and basins and micro-detention areas also reduces the volume and rate of runoff, but has the further benefit of trapping sediments.

The reforestation of steep slopes can reduce erosion from these areas. The establishment of riparian corridors can help to stabilize the tops of banks of streams, and also act as filter strips for sediment from runoff. Riparian corridors will also provide additional infiltration and detention capability. Riparian corridors are especially



beneficial for re-establishing flood plain connectivity of a stream or creek. In some cases, a riparian corridor may be up to 200 feet wide or greater. The width of a riparian corridor should be determined by hydro-geomorphic conditions. This greatly reduces the "flashiness" of a stream that results from storm water runoff in an urban setting.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and State and local agencies have identified and published best practices for erosion control, particularly for construction projects. The Department of Parks, Recreation and Forestry should become a leader in the region for following best practices for erosion control.

Forests

- **Forest Inventory:** Conduct inventories of forest resources. The forest inventory generally should be of forest types, but may be expanded to include a tree inventory. The forest inventory should also include a statement as to the overall quality and condition of the forest. This will guide the Parks Department in establishing a management plan. Volunteers and non-profit organizations can assist with a forest inventory. Federal and State agencies can frequently provide technical support in developing a management plan. A forest inventory should include the broad classification, dominant tree species, the condition of the understory, and the species mix of the understory. There are several measures that can be used to ascertain the quality of a forested area. Measures chosen

should be appropriate to the site. All parks with existing forest habitat should be included.

- **Forest Restoration:** Restore forested areas in parks. Restoring areas of former forest can reduce park maintenance costs as well as provide ecological benefits. Rather than mowing steep slopes, these areas should be allowed to revert to forest. In areas of karst topography with prevalent sinkholes, certain sinkholes may be allowed to revert to natural forest. Former riparian corridors are also candidate areas for reforestation.

There are two main options for reforesting large areas. On the one hand an area can be taken out of cultivation. In most park systems the cultivated area is usually grass land that is mowed on a regular basis. Eliminating mowing will allow an area to go through various stages of succession. This process of reforestation can and usually takes years. It offers the advantage that the various stages of succession can be observed and monitored for educational purposes. Existing open canopy forests in a park are ideal locations for ceasing mowing and allowing reversion back to a savannah type habitat. The second primary method of reforestation is the use of one to two year old nursery "whips" or seedlings. In this method, whips of desired dominant species are planted at a very high density. The area is then allowed to revert naturally. With this method, desirable tree species are given a head-start over certain dominant primary colonizers.

- **Forest Invasive Species:** Implement an invasive species control program for forest resources. One of the goals of urban forestry is to



determine the level of non-native species that is acceptable, and the species that are non-acceptable. Due to changes in the urban environment forest areas may lose diversity if an aggressive species becomes dominant. This is applicable to all forest areas.

- **Forest Enhancement:** Enhance existing forested areas. Supplemental plantings in forested areas can be used to enhance quality. This generally involves planting species that may have been crowded out by aggressive non-native species. Native ornamental species may be used to enhance certain forest areas. Caution should be used, however, not to change a species mix in a given forest type for the sake of appearance only. Appropriate resource agencies should be contacted for guidance on any enhancement program.

Forest inventories, enhancement and restoration should be conducted at all parks. Inventories and demonstration projects should be conducted first at the following parks:

- Carondelet Park
- O'Fallon Park
- Willmore Park
- Chain of Rocks Park
- North Riverfront Park
- Francis Park
- Fairgrounds Park

- **Tree City:** Continue the Tree City USA program. The recommendations for forest enhancement and restoration would be aided through the continuation and expansion of the Tree City USA program. The Tree City program requires a city

to meet four standards created by the National Arbor Day Foundation and the National Association of State Foresters. The required standards are:

- **Appoint a Tree Board or Department—**St. Louis already has a Forestry Department, which is responsible for maintenance of trees in parks and along city streets.
- **Create a Tree Ordinance—**A tree care ordinance would provide guidance on species selection, planting, maintenance, and removal of trees from streets, parks, and other public spaces.
- **Establish a Forestry Program with a Budget that is at least \$2 per Capita—**This budget level (approximately \$700,000 for St. Louis) is intended to ensure that a city has adequate funds to implement a forest management plan. The St. Louis Forestry Division budget is \$6.6 million per year, including \$1.7 million dedicated to the maintenance of the City's 80,000 street trees and 30,000 park trees.
- **Establish an Annual Arbor Day Celebration and Proclamation—**Cities have flexibility to accomplish this standard; it could simply be a short speech and tree planting or an extensive city-wide celebration. The St. Louis Forestry Department should continue to coordinate with the State on Arbor Day celebrations. The proposed Volunteer Office/Marketing Office should coordinate any expanded Tree City programs.



Grasslands

- **Grassland Inventories:** Conduct inventories of grasslands in city parks. As with forests, the location, amount, type and quality of grassland must be inventoried. These inventories should also identify areas for potential grassland restoration.
- **Grassland Invasive Species:** Implement an invasive species control program for grassland resources. Restored grasslands, particularly wetlands, are subject to invasive species control, or to aggressive native dominants, if not controlled.
- **Grassland Restoration and Enhancement:** Identify appropriate locations for grassland enhancement and establishment. Grasslands may be established by allowing an area to revert from a maintained lawn to naturally growing species. Once the foundation of a grassland habitat is established, the grassland may be enhanced with supplemental planting of desired species. Care must be taken not to allow one species to become dominant.

Grassland types once common in the St. Louis region include prairies, certain emergent wetlands, wet meadows and glades, among others. Many of these types would be suitable for establishment in the parks system.

Protection

- **Habitat Protection:** Establish a habitat protection program. Once established, habitat areas must be protected from encroachment by other park uses, while allowing for the maximum enjoyment of an area by park users. The habitat protection program can be incorporated into the Master Plan for each park. The habitat protection program should include provisions for increasing habitat diversity.

Habitat diversity will enhance environmental quality, particularly water resources. Incorporating habitat diversity within park system boundaries and beyond can be a key component of a green infrastructure. Multiple habitat types will reduce overall maintenance costs. Incorporating habitat diversity will enhance the experience of the user, and increase the type of activities available to a park user.

Open Space

Plan Principles

- **Develop an open space system that enhances both native species habitats and public gathering areas.** Although urban development has erased most “naturally occurring” natural areas within the city, there are areas that can be reclaimed and improved to create habitats for native bird species.



Areas of “lost space”, such as large expanses of asphalt in a roadway intersection, or small pocket green spaces (such as the northwest corner of 20th Street and Pine Street), or even riverfront property, should be incorporated into a holistic open space system. A functioning urban ecology should be one element of a successful community; another important element is urban sociology, which for the purpose of this plan is considered a vibrant setting for public gathering and celebration such as Memorial Plaza. These two elements of an urban system should successfully coexist.

- **Utilize transportation assets to restore natural areas and corridors.** Transportation corridors generally are considered in a one dimensional manner: as a means of getting from one place to another. The aesthetic and environmental values of these corridors have become more of a design focus. Transportation corridors, which include highways, city streets, MetroLink, and the Mississippi River, are unique opportunities to enhance the open space system by creating corridors for urban wildlife (particularly native bird species) and linking small green spaces.

Plan Actions

Green Streets: Develop a “Green Streets” program. Maintenance of landscaped medians, boulevards, roundabouts (traffic circles) and triangle medians at multiple road intersections should continue to be the responsibility of the St. Louis Parks Department. The Parks Department should expand on existing partnerships with local commercial districts, neighborhood organizations, and community/floral

garden organizations for assistance in the maintenance of these small open spaces. The Department could provide partners with technical oversight and training on the appropriate level of maintenance, the design of these spaces and hardscape and plant material.



Open Space Acquisition: Give sites with natural resources a high priority for acquisition as passive recreation or open space preservation. Linear areas along waterways such as River Des Peres and the Mississippi River are an important part of natural resource conservation in the city and should be a high priority for land acquisition and preservation.



Linkages between large and small patches of open space should be acquired to minimize the fragmentation of natural areas and improve the ecological value of these parcels. Partnerships to acquire and restore open space with the Great Rivers Greenway District, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Missouri Department of Conservation, the Nature Conservancy, National Park Service, the Audubon Society and other appropriate non-profit organizations would increase the viability of natural resource conservation for transient and native resident species.

Native Birds: Enhance habitat for native bird populations. Expand partnerships with the Audubon Society, Missouri Botanical Garden, and Missouri Department of Conservation to create a palette of appropriate plant materials to establish native bird habitats in the boulevard, greenway, "Green Streets" and open space system. This program should be expanded to include neighborhood associations and community garden organizations for implementation of the program. This will enhance habitat for native species along transportation corridors, open space/natural areas, and parks.

Open Space and Urban Redevelopment: Encourage developers to include public open space and streetscape improvements in redevelopment projects. Develop guidelines for the provision and maintenance of on-site public open space in redevelopment projects. Guidelines should address plant materials, linkages to greenway/bike routes, viewsheds, linkages to important landmarks, parks and open space, and minimal maintenance standards. This policy should address higher density residential, office and business parks, large scale commercial and riverboat casino sites. Although this

policy should be applied throughout the city, high priority areas include the waterfronts of the Mississippi River and River Des Peres. Developers should have the option to contribute to the proposed Payment-in-Lieu-Of program.

Open space is not just for the street level. The rooftops of older industrial buildings, particularly those redeveloped as loft apartments, should be utilized as rooftop terraces and gardens.

Infrastructure Corridors: Develop open space standards for public infrastructure (projects of the St. Louis Board of Public Service, Metro, MSD, and MoDOT). Infrastructure corridors such as I-70, I-64, I-44, I-55, MetroLink, and elements of the regional sewer system provide a unique opportunity to introduce habitat into an urban area, and to provide a link between larger habitat areas in parks. Traditionally, these infrastructure corridors have been planted in a monoculture or blend of fescue-type grasses. These areas should be used for establishing more natural, low maintenance prairie and forest habitats.

Gateway Mall: Retain and enhance the Gateway Mall. This linear open space functions as open space, civic gathering space, areas for special events, and a quiet place to sit and eat lunch.



Community Gardens

Plan Principles

- **Continue to build the city-wide open space system through Community Gardens.** Community Gardens have provided a valuable role in neighborhood stabilization and the provision of open space in St. Louis. The opportunity for residents to take an active part in “greening” the city through the establishment of vegetable and ornamental gardens has resulted in islands of open space and social interaction, fewer unkept vacant lots, and contributions to the City’s parks and open space system. As a policy, the City of St. Louis should encourage the establishment and ongoing maintenance of properly distributed Community Gardens, including private Garden sites, Park sites, and publicly-leased sites.
- **Encourage opportunities for properly distributed privately-held and publicly-held (LRA) Community Gardens.** Community Garden properties are both privately held (located on private or non-City owned property such as school grounds) and publicly held (located on City-owned Land Reutilization Authority or Parks Department property and leased for garden use). The private network of Community Gardens consists of approximately 120 sites. The City’s LRA Garden Lease program is responsible for 225 parcels representing approximately 50 active Community Gardens based on a 2004 visual survey by the Parks Department.

This Plan provides a rational approach to the current LRA Garden Lease properties to identify those Gardens that should be retained and those that may serve a more valuable function as a housing site in new neighborhood developments.

Plan Actions

Private Community Gardens: Encourage the creation of Community Gardens on private property and the establishment of long-term relationships with sponsor organizations (such as Gateway Greening, Inc.) providing technical support and supplies. The siting of private Gardens should require approval by the City Planning Commission. Minimum requirements for designation as a sponsored Community Garden should include support by at least 10 adults and a long term management plan. Ultimately, some of these properties should be acquired by the Garden users or sponsor organizations and conveyed to a Land Trust for perpetual maintenance.

Retain Active LRA Gardens in Neighborhood Preservation Areas: Functioning “active” Community Gardens under the LRA Garden Lease program located in Neighborhood Preservation Areas (St. Louis Strategic Land use Plan) should be retained. This currently consists of approximately 30 LRA-owned Garden sites located over 12 City wards and 18 neighborhoods.

Evaluate Active LRA Gardens in Neighborhood Development Areas at the Time of Proposed Redevelopment: Functioning “active” Community Gardens under the LRA Garden Lease program located in Neighborhood Development Areas, Opportunity Areas, and Specialty Mixed Use Areas



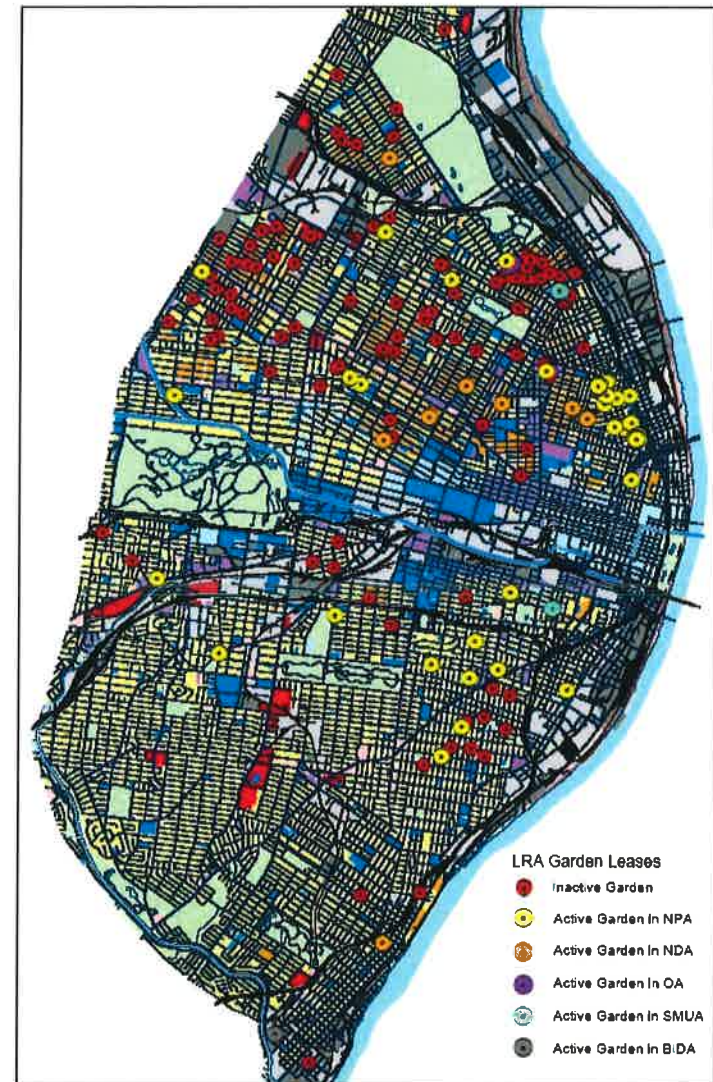
(St. Louis Strategic Land use Plan) should be retained, but evaluated for their continuance in light of proposed redevelopment in the area. These Community Gardens currently consist of only 5 LRA-owned Garden sites located in the Mark Twain, St. Louis Place, JeffVanderLou, Central West End, and Vandeventer Neighborhoods.

LRA Garden Potential: Review opportunities for Community Gardens in underserved areas. Underserved areas in north St. Louis without “active” LRA Community Gardens should be assessed through discussions with residents to determine the need and potential for creating Gardens. Opportunities include the evaluation of “inactive” Community Garden sites, other available LRA properties, park sites, and private land. High priority underserved areas include neighborhoods surrounding the following parks:

- Perry Park
- Sherman Park
- Barret Brothers Park
- Handy Park
- Tandy Park
- Seay Park

Inactive LRA Gardens: Review the need for Community Gardens in lower priority areas. The remainder of the “inactive” Community Gardens should be reviewed by City Aldermen, City Administration, Planning and Urban Design Agency, and Parks Department personnel for a determination as to their continued participation in the Garden Lease program, or their disposal.

Map of LRA Garden Leases by Strategic Land Use Category





Plan Theme: Value

Promote the value of parks and open space for the region's residents, businesses and visitors.

Over the City's nearly 200 year history, one element of a civil society has remained constant, the importance of the City of St. Louis as the cultural and economic heart of the region. Because of the early recognition of the importance of a park system and the attractiveness of the city, the St. Louis park system grew rapidly in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Today, parks continue to be an extremely valuable contributor to the quality of life of city residents. They provide open space within the city offering opportunities to participate in organized sports events, view urban wildlife, or simply relax. City parks also provide people that live outside the city but work in the city an opportunity to relax, eat a lunch outdoors or, at the end of the day, easily get to a park to play softball, walk a trail or watch a theater production. The rich history of the City's largest regional parks is recognized outside the region, and as a result, tourists make a point to visit Forest Park and Tower Grove Park.

Plan Principles

- **Recognize and promote the regional economic, social, and environmental contributions of parks and open space to the quality of life of residents, the retention and attraction of businesses, and the enjoyment of visitors.** Because parks contribute so much to the life of residents, employees and tourists the St. Louis parks system should be part of the overall plan for economic development. Packaging the value of parks with economic development requires coordination and partnership with other city departments, economic development and tourism organizations, and regional marketing efforts.
- **Use parks and open space to stimulate economic development.** Cities across America have witnessed amazing property value transformations after building parks and greenways. Particularly in underutilized and industrial areas, rising property values and subsequent private-sector development is many times greater than the initial public cost of park or greenway implementation. This return on investment is not only wise economics, but has few comparable strategies for revitalizing distressed and marginal urban areas.
- **Use parks and open space to grow social capital.** Healthier communities with active citizens are benefits that typically follow the installation of recreational facilities and public open spaces. Furthermore, by attracting a range of residents, parks and greenways provide opportunities for diverse social interaction and safer places for children and senior citizens to



recreate. Children also benefit as schools, institutions and other organizations gain access to natural environments for educational and interpretive activities. As important as all of these benefits, parks and greenways help build community pride and individual dignity—simply by making the urban environment a more attractive, valuable place to live. Ultimately, building social capital is manifest in improving residents' quality of life.

- **Use parks and open space to foster environmental stewardship.** Parks and greenways are the physical armature in urban situations that link natural areas together. Parks and greenway corridors are valuable for migrating animals and for the sustainability of native plant communities that depend on plant succession, microclimate variety, and the movement of animals to aid pollination and propagation. In addition, greenways contribute to increasing the overall area of open space, with linear branches, reaching within densely developed neighborhoods. The many benefits of these branches include improved air quality, less groundwater runoff, aquifer recharge zones, cleaner groundwater, less windborne dust and particles, and reduced urban heat island effects.

While these are indisputable benefits, perhaps the most important environmental benefit is developing a deeper understanding, appreciation and affection for the natural environment in urban residents. This is the core of fostering an attitude of benevolent stewardship, caring for the natural environment.

Plan Actions

Property Values: Monitor property values in the vicinity of parks. Coordinate with the St. Louis Planning and Urban Design Agency to monitor the financial impact of parks on real estate values in the vicinity of parks. Develop a GIS/database to analyze and monitor trends. The expected increase in values should be used to justify additional public expenditures or encourage private expenditures for parks and open space.

Proximity to Neighborhoods: Encourage residential redevelopment near existing parks. New or redeveloped residential neighborhoods should be a higher priority for areas in the immediate proximity of parks. When possible, these areas should include higher density residential uses to increase the population within a short distance of the park. Where possible, new residential development should front parks and include front porches to provide additional benefits to the homeowner and promote social interaction.

Encourage Connectivity: Encourage new development to accommodate connections to the greenway and trail network. Residential, commercial and light industrial development should be designed to provide pedestrian linkages to the city and regional greenway and trail system.

Promote Economic Development and Tourism: Promote recreation- and tourism-related businesses near popular park attractions and greenway trailheads. Businesses that would be attractive to local and regional bicyclists and runners should be encouraged to locate in existing or designated



commercial districts near greenway trailheads. Types of establishments that could be encouraged include:

- Bike sales/rental shops
- Sporting goods stores
- Casual fast food restaurants (with outdoor space)
- Hotels
- Bed and breakfasts
- Gift and souvenir shops
- Information, ticket, and tour offices

Expand Access for Tourists: Encourage and coordinate expansion of tourism-related activities.

Increase access to the local and regional trail system by providing trail maps to local hotels, and encouraging bike rentals (or providing information on local providers) at hotels, and other means.

Marketing Office: Establish a Marketing Office in the St. Louis Parks Department. Establishment of a Marketing Office should be coordinated with the establishment of the Volunteer Office discussed earlier. This office should partner with existing visitor attraction and other public/private organizations marketing the St. Louis area, such as the St. Louis Convention and Visitors Commission and the Downtown Partnership.

The Marketing Office should accomplish tasks that include:

- Attraction of visitors to the city park system through organized activities and special events.
- Development of Parks Programs/Special Event Catalogs.
- Maintenance of the City Parks web page.
- Preparation of news releases.

- Creation of a "Brand" for the St. Louis Park system.
- Promotion of the quality of life (including health) benefits derived from the city park system and the pedestrian circulation system.
- Marketing of the city park system to local business and economic development organizations.
- Promotion of unique greenway, park and recreation facilities as destinations.
- Marketing of the heritage, cultural resources, and institutions at the regional and national level.
- Marketing of St. Louis as the geographic center and hub for an emerging network of recreation trails.





Plan Theme: Heritage

Celebrate the rich heritage of the parks system and the City of St. Louis through cultural resource protection and interpretation.

Parks have been an integral part of St. Louis' development for almost 200 years. Open spaces, or town commons, were incorporated into towns in the early years of the area's settling. The first recreation oriented park was dedicated in the mid-1800s. City residents have enjoyed a long tradition of excellent park planning and design since those first parks. The greatest period in the city's history was likely the convergence of two world events in 1904 when the city was the host of the World's Fair and the Olympics; two events that showcased St. Louis to the world. The greatness of these two events still touches the lives of citizens in St. Louis to this day. In fact, the current resurgence in interest in the city's park system is directly tied to the 100-year anniversary celebration of the 1904 World's Fair occurring in Forest Park and along the banks of the Mississippi River.

This rich history cannot be lost. Cultural resources within the city park system range from small public sculptures to Tower Grove Park, a National Historic Landmark. Many historic structures exist within the parks system, some have been documented and included in the National Register of Historic Places and others are potentially eligible for listing in the Register. The St. Louis parks system heritage of quality landscape design and architecture needs to be properly catalogued, preserved, restored where

necessary and promoted to area residents and visitors.

Plan Principle

- **Capture the rich heritage of the St. Louis parks system.** Some of the most significant cultural resources in the St. Louis parks system are found in such parks as Tower Grove Park, Forest Park, Lafayette Park and Carondelet Park and enjoy strong public support for their maintenance. However, not all parks in St. Louis receive the same public support and important cultural resources in those parks do not necessarily receive the same level of maintenance or protection. To ensure that significant cultural resources throughout the parks system are captured for current and future generations, a comprehensive program of cultural resource identification, preservation and interpretation should be completed.

Plan Actions

Cultural Resources Inventory: Conduct a system-wide inventory of cultural resources and create a GIS/database of those resources. A comprehensive inventory of cultural resources within the park system should be conducted. Many cultural resources are known and cataloged; however they are identified by a street address only. The inventory should result in a mapping system and database that specifically locates and catalogs the significant characteristics of the City's cultural resources.



Preservation Strategies: Cultural resources preservation strategies should be incorporated into appropriate park master/stewardship plans. Following completion of the system wide cultural resource inventory, mapping, and database creation, park master plans should incorporate cultural resources preservation and interpretation into the planning and design process.

Interpretive Programs: Develop interpretive programs for cultural resources and incorporate into park master/stewardship plans. Interpretive programs should be developed for cultural resources within the park system. Interpretive programs could range from simple signage to more established programs that would require volunteers.

Staff Training: Train park maintenance personnel in appropriate techniques for working with historic structures, buildings, landscapes and objects. The National Park Service, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the State of Missouri have prepared numerous technical publications and sponsor training programs that can be helpful in assuring that appropriate techniques are utilized in the maintenance and repair of cultural resources.

Links to Neighborhoods: Coordinate with the St. Louis Planning and Urban Design Agency and neighborhoods to ensure that parks are a focal point in the development of neighborhood plans and historic districts' design guidelines. The rich history of the parks system and city neighborhoods should continue to be celebrated through thoughtful neighborhood planning and design. The character of the neighborhood park should be reflected in the neighborhood and the character of the neighborhood should be reflected in the park.

Acceptance Criteria: Develop criteria for acceptance of public art/objects. The St. Louis Parks Department should establish criteria for acceptance of public art or other types of statuary, fountains or memorials. One element of the acceptance criteria should be a maintenance endowment to help ensure proper funding for the long-term maintenance of the object. The *Public Art in Forest Park Administration and Policy Regulations* should be used as a guide for development of a system-wide set of policies on public art in city parks.



Plan Theme: Connectivity

Create a full network of greenways, trails and bicycle routes to connect the city's parks with neighborhoods, schools, cultural institutions, and business districts.

In most of the country's great urban park systems wonderful parks are connected by extensive greenways, trails and boulevards. These connections facilitate use, foster ownership and stewardship, and instill a belief that parks are an ubiquitous fabric that reaches every neighborhood of the city. In cities that have built strong open space networks, the economic, social and environmental benefits are obvious and measurable, with robust property values, high quality of life, clean air and water, and healthy native flora and fauna. In short, greenways help establish sustainable urban conditions.

St. Louis' individual parks are wonderful places and contribute to the health of their respective neighborhoods. However, the park system currently functions as a collection of disconnected entities, physically isolated from each other. Over time, with the institution of strong physical connections, the park system could evolve into an interconnected web of open space, in which individual parks are components of a much larger composition that contributes to the health and vitality of the City and region, in addition to specific neighborhoods.

The concept of urban connectivity is broad and incorporates elements that go beyond linear parks and open space. Furthermore, the theme of connectivity must be treated differently from the

other themes of the Park and Open Space Plan. Connections would be created in a variety of ways, most of which surpass the mission, authority and resources of the Parks Department. In fact, most of the recommendations outlined in this plan would be the primary responsibility of The Great Rivers Greenway District. Implementation will require long-term partnerships between Great Rivers Greenway, the Parks Department, other city departments, public agencies (federal, state, regional and local), private developers and non-profit groups.

A Vision for the City and the Region

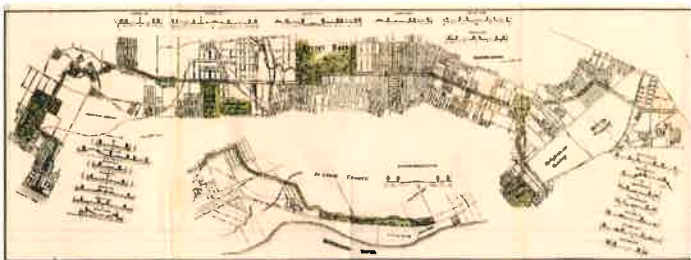
Connecting the region's communities to parks through open space corridors is not a new idea in St. Louis. As early as 1875, the Missouri Assembly passed the "Boulevard Bill" which was intended to facilitate connecting Forest Park, Carondelet Park and O'Fallon Park with boulevards. Over the following decades various concepts evolved including notable plans in 1891 and 1907 that were sporadically implemented. Recent planning efforts for greenways (2000, 2003), trails (2001, 2004) and boulevards (1992) have revived the century-old vision of establishing open space connections between the City's most valuable assets.

Following citizen approval of the 2000 Proposition C, the Clean Water, Safe Parks and Community Trails Initiative, the Great Rivers Greenway District was established in St. Louis City, St. Louis County and St. Charles County. The District's mission is to implement the "River Ring"—an interconnected system of greenways, parks and trails throughout the three-county area—and to coordinate greenway development with the complementary Metro-East Park and Recreation District in Illinois.





Map of St. Louis City & County prepared for the City Plan Report of the Civic League showing Proposed Improvements for Parks, Parkways, and Boulevards.



The Kingshighway, Nineteen Miles in Length, Parkway Plan provided for in the "Recent Bond Issue".

The inter-jurisdictional nature and large scale of open space connections necessitates long-range planning and diverse partnerships coordinated by Great Rivers Greenway. On the other end of the scale, the St. Louis Parks Department is responsible for the most local level of open space connectivity—tree lawns that line virtually every street and sidewalk in the city. Between these two scales, from regional greenways to local connections, there is a full spectrum of open space linkage opportunities. Each type of connection will require a distinct, and likely unique, partnership for planning, implementation and long-term maintenance.

St. Louis is a green city. Viewed from the air, it appears as a forest of mature trees, with a vast canopy obscuring dense, urban neighborhoods. By conceiving of the tree lawn that lines the entire street network as open space, the public realm, functioning as a system of connections, becomes an extension of the park system. Conceptually, the whole City can be viewed to exist within a park setting.

Downtown, major new developments, the emerging tourism and convention industry and a growing residential population will be the beneficiaries of improved connections to the Riverfront. Existing and planned projects could soon link the downtown core with the Gateway Arch grounds, the newly refurbished Arch steps, the Riverfront, Eads Bridge and the Laclede Power Building Trailhead with a lid over I-70, as an extension of the Gateway Mall.

Over time, the full network of park, recreation and open space connections should blanket the entire City of St. Louis, providing safe, attractive and convenient access to every neighborhood. Ideally, with good sidewalks, tree-lined streets and safe intersection crossings, characteristics of the park system should extend to the front yard of every resident in the City.

After the 1904 World's Fair, Forest Park was returned to the City as the legacy for the 20th Century. The regional greenway network is poised to become this generation's legacy for the 21st Century, with St. Louis at the geographic, historic and sentimental center of the network. As this vision for the City and the region develops, the partners involved should never lose sight of the fact that it is a long-term plan



that will benefit future generations and ensure the City's vitality for years to come.

Plan Principles

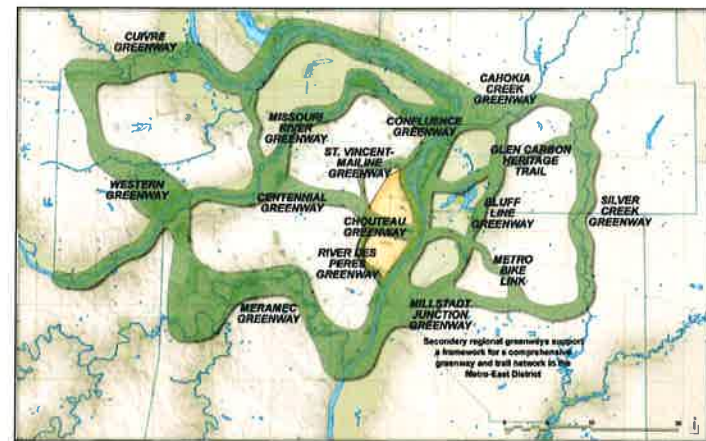
Local connections, intertwined with each other, readily connect to a network of boulevards, parkways and greenways, and eventually to the regional greenway system—the River Ring. A progressive hierarchy of connection ensures appropriately scaled corridors per site-specific conditions, as well as a rational means for building the necessary partnerships to implement the system over time.

The unique characteristics of St. Louis' parks, neighborhoods and physical development pattern prescribe the opportunities and potential for building open space connections throughout the City. Greenways, trails, and boulevards are the three primary types of connections the City, Great Rivers Greenway District, and other implementation partners can utilize to link parks to neighborhoods, business districts, institutions, and cultural facilities. Each category contributes to a long-term vision that can be implemented incrementally, beginning with projects that are already underway.

Most connectivity principles consist of establishing or adopting a concept that will be implemented over time by a host of partners.

Greenway Principles

Many definitions exist for greenways, based on specific community and environmental characteristics. However, for the St. Louis area, the Great Rivers Greenway District's Citizen-Driven Regional Plan defined greenways as open space corridors that foster relationships between people and the natural environment. Greenways are typically associated with a linear natural feature (such as a river, stream, forest or ridge), a substantial amount of open space (public and private) and facilities for public use (trails, parks or institutions). Intersections between natural corridors are designated as confluences—ideal locations for interpretive displays, information kiosks, trailheads, and user facilities such as restrooms, shelters and parking.



St. Louis' planned Regional Greenway System.



- **Support collaboration with adjacent jurisdictions to enable City connections to St. Louis, St. Clair and Madison Counties.** The successful adaptation of the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge and Eads Bridge to accommodate pedestrians and bicycles demonstrates opportunities for creating similar connections on other bridges, such as the McKinley and MacArthur Bridges. As both symbolic and practical linkages between Missouri and Illinois, these river crossings also facilitate the potential for shorter loops and day trips.

Providing access to adjacent greenways, particularly to St. Louis County, are also important to providing City residents additional opportunities to experience less urban environments, as well as linking to other regional destinations. These greenways include Gravois Creek Greenway, Shady Creek Greenway, Deer Creek Greenway, Centennial Greenway and Coldwater Creek Greenway (by way of St. Vincent or Maline Creek Greenways).

- **Establish the Forest Ring as a greenway loop around the perimeter of the City.** Major greenways of the River Ring would link vital destinations to the regional network. A ring of major greenways is emerging around the perimeter of the City, linking to the Mississippi River and Forest Park. This Forest Park ring—or “Forest Ring”—is made up of River Des Peres Greenway, St. Vincent Greenway, Maline Greenway, Confluence Greenway and the Mississippi River Greenway. As a continuous greenbelt or loop around the City, the Forest Ring provides access to other major regional greenways that extend in multiple directions from the City into St. Louis, Madison and St. Clair Counties.



- **Establish a primary regional east-west greenway that will bisect the Forest Ring and connect Forest Park with the Gateway Arch and the Mississippi River.** Providing a direct connection between Forest Park and the Downtown St. Louis Riverfront, a corridor, such as the proposed Chouteau Greenway between Highway 40 and Chouteau Avenue would extend east-west through the heart of the City. This greenway reinforces the central corridor's historic role as a transportation route while restoring a significant portion of the creek (La Petite Riviere or later, Mill Creek) that existed prior to the 1850s. As a multiuse greenway, it will become the primary bicycle and pedestrian connection linking many City neighborhoods to Downtown and Forest Park.

- **Establish a primary regional north-south greenway that will bisect the Forest Ring and connect the north riverfront, O'Fallon Park, Fairground Park, Tower Grove Park, Carondelet Park and Willmore Park.** Complementing the primary east-west Chouteau Greenway, an opportunity exists to establish a major north-south greenway through the middle of the City. This route could provide many additional neighborhoods access to the River Ring, Forest Park and Downtown. In South City, planning has already identified Christy Greenway (anchored by Willmore and Christy Parks) as an ideal beginning to this corridor, eventually extending north to connect Tower Grove Park, the Missouri Botanical Garden, Chouteau Greenway, Fairground Park, O'Fallon Park, Bellefontaine and Calvary Cemeteries, and the Confluence Greenway's North Riverfront Trail and

the Laclede Power Building Trailhead along the Mississippi River.

- **Support the development of local greenways and recreational corridors that connect City neighborhoods to City parks, regional greenways and other significant destinations.** Local streets represent likely opportunities to create connections between neighborhoods, parks and other destinations. These opportunities are numerous and exist throughout the city. Policies coordinated with other City departments (such as Streets and BPS) could establish these routes and facilities over time, in conjunction with normal maintenance and infrastructure upgrades. All typical streets of a minimum size could be candidates for bikeways, while curbs and sidewalks at every intersection could be enhanced over time to create a safer pedestrian environment.
- **Bring the park system to the doorstep of every home in the City.** Tree lawns buffer almost every home in the City from the adjacent street, and are currently under the jurisdiction of the City's Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department. By conceiving of this narrow strip of landscape as a more important element in the City's open space network, the concept could instill an attitude of ownership and stewardship with adjacent property owners and residents. Since the maintenance of these areas is the primary responsibility of adjacent property owners, it is a cost-effective mechanism to enhance the visual and environmental quality of neighborhood streets.



Trail and Bikeway Principles

Trails and bikeways are recreation *and* transportation infrastructure. They serve a wide range of users and types of activities such as walking, jogging, in-line skating, skateboarding and bicycling. Typically these are non-motorized activities, but must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, providing accommodations for wheelchairs, scooters and other forms of low speed individual motorized transportation. Universally designed facilities meet the requirements of many user types and are not exclusively for ADA use.

- **Support the development of trails in desired locations throughout the City, primarily along greenway or boulevard corridors.**

Trails are often components of greenways but they commonly occur on their own in urban environments where open space is limited and natural features are scarce. Essentially, trails are the facilities that enable pedestrians to move throughout the City. By far the most common form of these facilities is the existing network of sidewalks that parallel virtually every street in the City. Although this is an important means for most residents to access parks, the creation of trails for recreational pedestrian activities, including multipurpose trails and new connector routes outside of existing street rights-of-way should be encouraged and supported.

- **Support the development of bikeways in desired locations throughout the City, primarily along greenway or boulevard corridors.** Bikeways are trails specifically designated for bicyclists (instead of pedestrians). The most common forms of urban bikeways are striped on-street lanes and signed bicycle routes (where street width does not permit designated bike laneage.) Off-road bike trails may occur inside or outside existing street rights-of-way and allow a more unobstructed path with less potential for vehicle/bicycle conflict.

Many roadways throughout the City are excessively wide for current levels of vehicular traffic. Among these are streets that at one time carried streetcars. These locations represent excellent opportunities to provide bikeways or bike trails. Ultimately, bicycle facilities could exist within every right-of-way that has adequate width, while bike trails could be incorporated as part of every proposed greenway.

- **Support the development of trailheads at strategic locations along pedestrian and bicycle trails.** Highly visible, significant or popular sites where users access trails and bikeways should be developed as trailheads. The proposed Laclede Power Building Trailhead is a high priority to serve the regional trail system with good access to Downtown, the Mississippi River, the North Riverfront Trail and Confluence Greenway.



Boulevard and Parkway Principles

Many vehicular transportation routes pose opportunities for multiple-use connections. Although the primary purpose of these corridors is likely to be for the movement of vehicles, ample right-of-way widths can provide space for trails, bikeways and landscaped open space. Typically, boulevards are wide streets with tree-lined center medians, whereas parkways have deep, landscaped setbacks behind the curb. In an urban setting like St. Louis, boulevards and parkways can act as very narrow linear parks, providing open space and recreational connections between parks. In fact, they may resemble greenways in form and function, but are defined as roadway corridors instead of as natural corridors that follow environmental features (such as a river, creek, ridge or bluff).

- **Support City efforts to implement boulevards and parkways based on previous plans.** Efforts to enhance particular City streets as boulevards have been pursued with varying degrees of success for more than 100 years. As facilities that are compatible with park system goals, and as potentially significant forms of linear open space, the conversion of streets to boulevards should be supported, particularly with the inclusion of accessible pedestrian and bicycle trails.

Many streets throughout the city may be candidates for boulevard improvements (or existing boulevards may be in need of enhancement). In recent years the City has successfully revived boulevard development by enhancing a number of highly visible corridors with boulevard characteristics including

landscaped medians and edge streetscapes. New boulevards in the City include Delmar (east of Skinker to Kingshighway), Oakland (east of Hampton), South Broadway (between Soulard and Kosciusko), Grand Avenue (adjacent Tower Grove Park) and Truman Parkway (in Lafayette Square). The City is proposing additional accommodations for medians and bicycle facilities on new bridges and viaducts, including Jefferson and Grand over the UP, BNSF and TRRA railroad corridors.

Plan Actions

Greenways

Greenway Liaison: Designate an individual or form an ad-hoc committee to be the primary liaison to coordinate implementation of a bi-state, regional greenway network. The liaison will collaborate with Great Rivers Greenway District, the Metro-East Park and Recreation District, St. Clair County, Madison County, St. Louis County and St. Charles County to cooperate in greenway planning and implementation. The liaison will also be responsible for assisting Great Rivers Greenway District's efforts to establish connections between the City and adjacent counties via regional and local greenways (Shady Creek, Deer Creek, Centennial, Gravois Creek and Coldwater) as well as Mississippi River bridges (Old Chain of Rocks, Eads, McKinley, and MacArthur).

River Ring: Adopt the concept of Great Rivers Greenway District's River Ring. Partner with the Great Rivers Greenway District and other applicable organizations and public agencies to implement the regional greenways of the River Ring that will be



physically linked to, or contained within, the City limits. These greenways will include:

- Confluence Greenway
- Mississippi River Greenway

Within the City limits, the River Ring generally follows the Mississippi River. Partnering with the Great Rivers Greenway District will expand the partnership of revitalizing the Mississippi Riverfront near downtown.

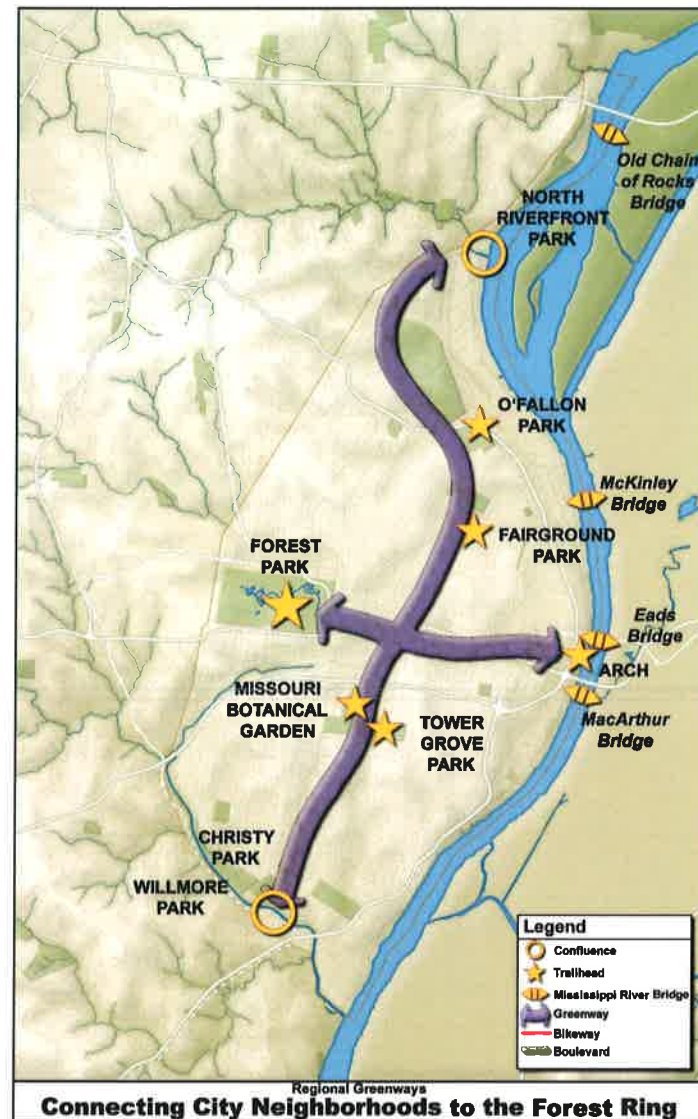
Forest Ring: Form a partnership to establish the Forest Ring as a greenway loop around the perimeter of the City. Partner with the Great Rivers Greenway District and other applicable organizations and public agencies to coordinate Forest Ring greenways' implementation. As semi-independent efforts, these greenways will be implemented over a long period of time, but will have a direct, positive benefit on the City. Strong neighborhood connections and quality development is necessary to ensure maximum benefit to the City. These greenways will include:

- Confluence Greenway
- Mississippi River Greenway
- River Des Peres Greenway
- St. Vincent Greenway
- Maline Creek Greenway



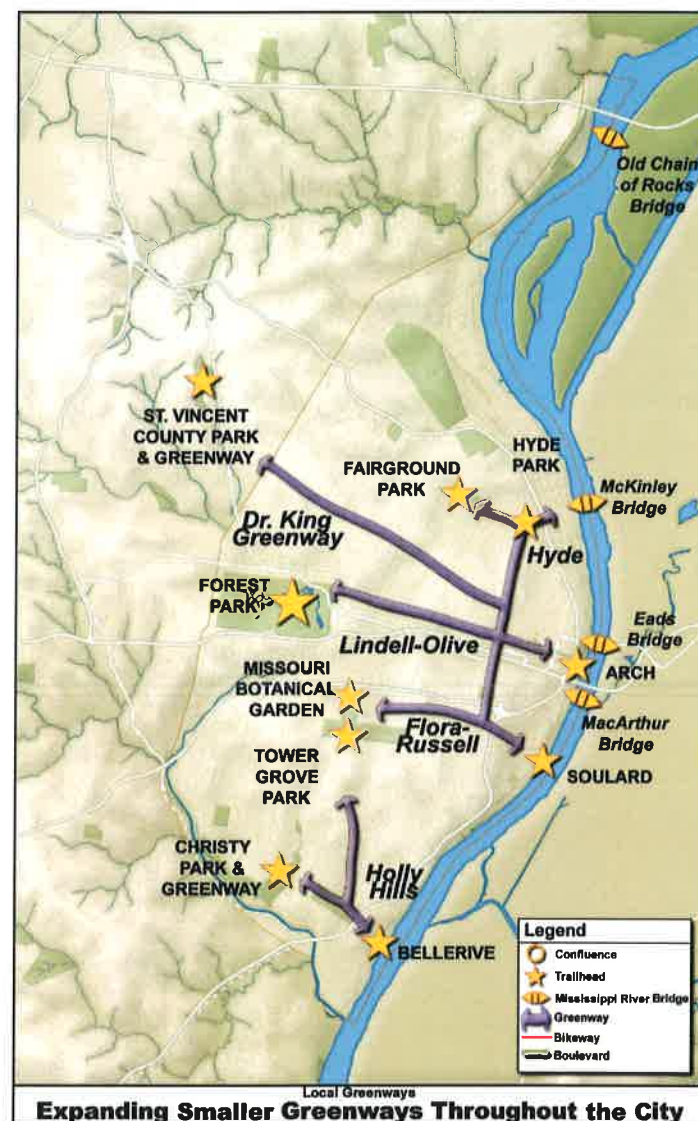
Chouteau Greenway: Explore the concept of Chouteau Greenway as the City's primary regional east-west greenway that will connect Forest Park with the Gateway Arch and the Mississippi River. Coordinate with the Great Rivers Greenway District and the anticipated public-private partnership in the development of Chouteau Greenway, Chouteau Lake and associated bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

North/South Greenway: Collaborate with the Great Rivers Greenway District to explore the concept of a primary regional north-south greenway that will connect the north riverfront, O'Fallon Park, Fairground Park, Tower Grove Park, Carondelet Park and Willmore Park. With Chouteau Greenway as a public-private partnership model, a similar partnership and strategy could be employed to build a major north-south greenway through the middle of the City, providing many additional neighborhoods access to the River Ring, Forest Park and Downtown. Extend Christy Greenway north to connect Tower Grove Park, the Missouri Botanical Garden, Chouteau Greenway, Fairground Park, O'Fallon Park, Bellefontaine and Calvary Cemeteries, and the Confluence Greenway's North Riverfront Trail along the Mississippi River.



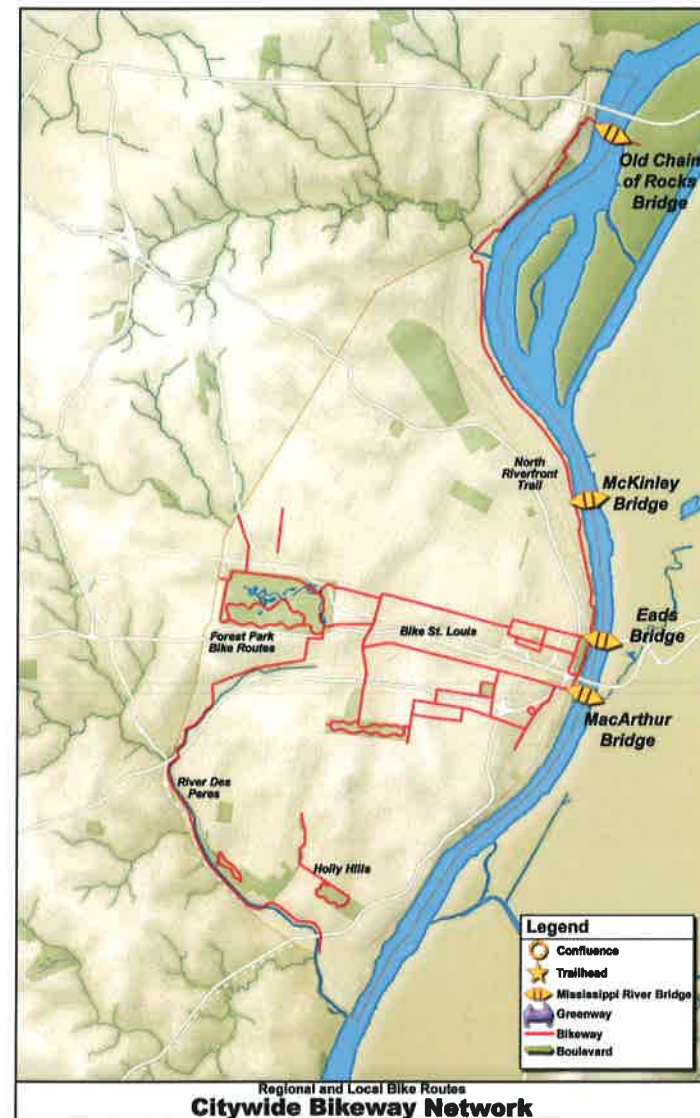
Local Greenways: Partner with the Great Rivers Greenway District and other City departments to establish a process for developing local greenways that connect City neighborhoods to City parks, regional greenways and other significant destinations. No agency or department has the resources to implement local greenways on its own. However, a process that identifies partners, potential funding sources, and maintenance agreements will facilitate implementation over many years. Local streets, represent likely opportunities to create local connections between neighborhoods, parks and other destinations.

Tree Lawns: Establish an outreach program to increase resident participation in extending the benefits of the park system to the public right-of-way tree lawns. Neighborhood associations, churches, schools and other community organizations represent potential forums for communicating the numerous benefits to planting and maintaining appropriate landscape materials (i.e., trees, ground cover, and turf grass) in City tree lawns. Since the maintenance of these areas is the primary responsibility of adjacent property owners, it is a cost-effective mechanism to enhance the visual and environmental quality of neighborhood streets, while raising property values.



Trails and Bikeways

Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes: Partner with other City departments, the Great Rivers Greenway District, neighborhood groups, and other organizations to establish new bicycle and pedestrian routes throughout the City. While groups and initiatives such as Trailnet, Bike St. Louis, and the East-West Gateway Council of Governments have been planning and implementing new trails and routes throughout the city for a number of years, there has been a lack of coordination and overall vision. These groups can accomplish more through partnership than individually. Additionally, neighborhood organizations can help identify desirable routes, cooperate in implementation and affirm positive demand for new bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Many roadways throughout the City are excessively wide for current levels of vehicular traffic or are so wide they encourage excessive vehicular speeds. Among these are streets that at one time carried streetcars. These locations represent opportunities to provide on-street bicycle routes. Ultimately, every right-of-way throughout the City that has adequate width could accommodate bicycle facilities.



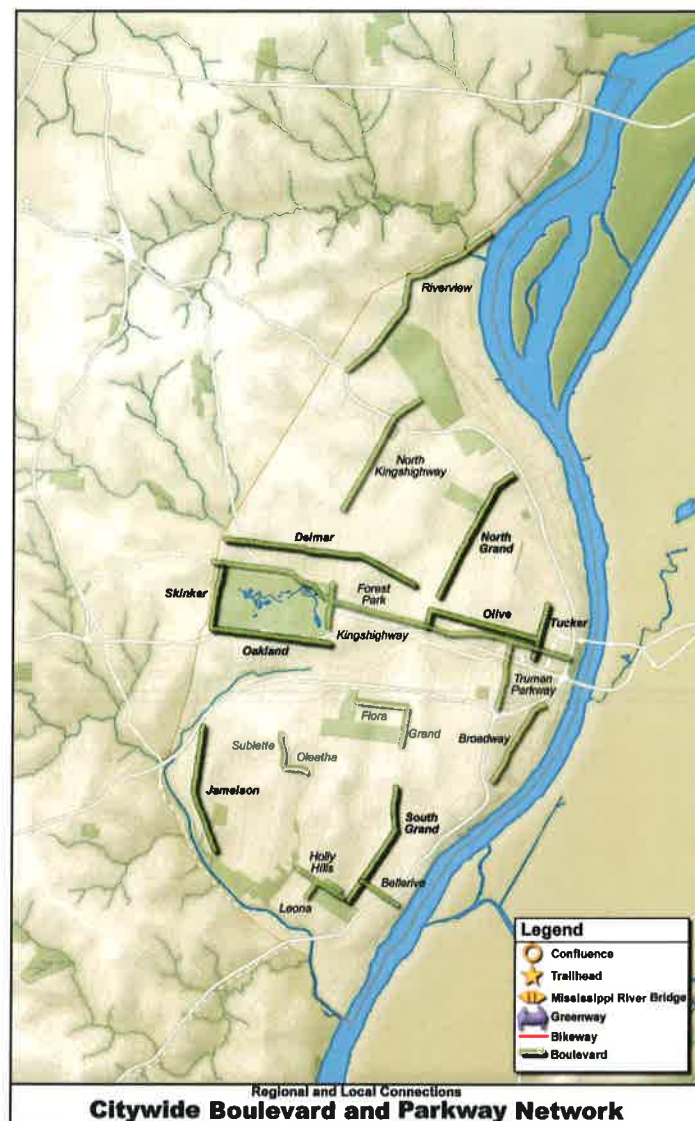
Trailheads: Partner with the Great Rivers Greenway District, Trailnet, East West Gateway, Bike St. Louis and other organizations to develop trailheads at strategic locations along pedestrian and bicycle trails. Highly visible, significant or popular sites where users access trails and bikeways should be developed as trailheads. These facilities will be designed to a level appropriate to their use and setting, featuring a range of amenities such as signage, maps, visitor and interpretive information, restrooms, parking, water fountains, picnic tables or shelters.

Mass Transit: Coordinate Metro bus routes to provide bus stops at trailheads and other greenway access locations. Metro bus routes should be coordinated with proposed trailhead development to ensure that busses with bike racks make stops at bike route and greenway trailheads.



Boulevards and Parkways

Boulevards and Parkways: Continue the century-old process of upgrading important street corridors to boulevards or parkways. Over time, segments of the boulevard plan can be implemented with the cooperation of other city agencies, as well as funding from a variety of sources (particularly federal transportation funds). Efforts should be made to continue boulevard enhancements that have improved streets such as Delmar, Oakland, Broadway and Grand. Additional boulevard improvements should prioritize corridors that will positively affect linking the City's parks and significant destinations (institutions, commercial districts, neighborhoods, the Mississippi River and other landmarks). Olive Boulevard, between Grand and Tucker, represents this type of opportunity. It has the physical capacity to include a center median without reducing vehicular lanes, on-street parking or the new Bike St. Louis bicycle lanes. As a strategic connection, it will be an open space linkage between the Main Library, Gateway Mall, the central businesses district, downtown loft neighborhoods, the AG Edwards and Sigma-Aldrich corporate campuses, the Grand Center entertainment district, and the Harris-Stowe College and Saint Louis University campuses.



Section IV—Plan Implementation

Funding

Current funding for the St. Louis Parks Department is principally derived from three sources: General Revenue Funds for operations and maintenance, a ½-cent Sales Tax for capital projects (approved in 1994), and the Metro Park District Sales Tax for capital projects approved in 2000.

Over the past six years, the St. Louis Parks Department has received a relatively constant four percent of the City's total General Revenue. The FY05 General Revenue Fund budget for the Parks Division, the Recreation Division, the parks-related Forestry Division activities, the Forest Park Fund (excluding the Tower Grove Park Fund), and CDBG and other anticipated grants, totaled \$13.2 million.

The ½-cent Sales Tax generates approximately \$2.2 million annually for capital improvements at the City's "Regional" Parks and \$450,000 annually for Recreation Center improvements. The Metro Parks 1/10-cent Sales Tax generates an annual average of \$2.1 million divided 60 percent for "Neighborhood" Parks and 40 percent for "Regional" Parks capital improvements. This provides a total anticipated annual revenue stream of \$18 million (FY05) for St. Louis parks and recreation, covering administration, maintenance, repairs, recreation programming, and capital improvements.

In a comparison of peer cities (representing the 25 largest Cities in America), St. Louis' population-adjusted parks revenue was more than 20 percent below the average, or \$5 million annually based on local revenue of \$18 million and peer revenue of \$23 million. In addition, the Parks Department relies on the General Fund for 68 percent of its revenue and User Fees for just three percent. Peer cities on average used General Fund sources for 50 percent of revenue, and User Fees for 10 percent.

In order to undertake the Plan Actions outlined earlier, the Department must expand beyond its current funding sources, explore potential areas for partnerships, and generate revenue by more market-based pricing of services for such items as programs, rentals, and events.

With an accumulated deferred maintenance cost for parks and recreation centers of nearly \$70 million, Regional Park Master Planned Improvements (new construction and future capital renewal) in excess of \$60 million, the \$45 million planned for construction of three new "Super" Community Centers, and enhanced annual maintenance costs, the Parks Department has reached a point where an immediate infusion of funds, in the form of a Bond Issue, is necessary.

However, the funding strategy must rely on multiple revenue streams—not on one or two sources—to make the Department and individual programs more self-supporting.



Cities and agencies nationwide are successfully supplementing General Revenue and Sales or Property Tax Bond Issue proceeds with funding sources from the list below. The St. Louis Parks Department should consider their use during the planning stage for new programs, parks, and facilities. Popular supplemental park revenue sources include:

Advertising Sales: This revenue source is selling tasteful and appropriate advertising for park and recreation-related items such as Program Catalogs, scoreboards, and other visible products or services that are consumable or permanent. This opportunity exposes the advertiser's product or service to many people.

Agreements with Private Concessionaires: This is a contract with a private business to provide and operate desirable recreational activities financed, constructed, and operated by the private sector with additional compensation paid to the city.

Annual Appropriation/Leasehold Financing: This is a more complex financing structure that requires a third party to issue the bonds, construct the facility, and retain title until the bonds are retired. The city enters into a lease agreement with the third party, with annual lease payments equal to the debt service requirements. The bonds issued by the third party are considered less secure than the city's general obligation bonds and thus cost more. Since a separate corporation issues these bonds, they do not affect the city's debt limitations and do not require a vote. However, they also do not entitle the city to levy property taxes to service the debt. The annual lease payments must be appropriated from existing revenues.

Boulevard Tax: Homeowners who live along scenic routes pay this tax based on lineal foot of frontage. Kansas City uses this tax, which covers the cost of improvements, fountains, and turf and landscape care.

Business Excise Tax: This tax of a new business that settles into a community is on products sold based on the wholesale cost. Park districts in Illinois use this as one of their revenue sources.

Capital Improvement Fees: These fees are in addition to the set user rate for accessing facilities such as golf courses, recreation centers, and pools to support capital improvements that benefit users.

Catering Permits and Services: This is a license to allow caterers to work in the park system on a permit basis; a set fee or a percentage of food sales is returned to the city. Cities with their own catering service receive a percentage of food sales.

Concession Management: Concession management comes from retail sales or rentals of soft goods, hard goods, or consumable items. The city either contracts for the service or receives a portion of the gross percentage or a portion of the full revenue dollars, which incorporate a profit after expenses.

Cost Avoidance: The department must take the position that it cannot be everything for everyone. The St. Louis Parks Department must be driven by the market and stay with the department's core businesses. By shifting its role as direct provider, the city will save money as it decides whether to provide a particular facility or program. Savings could be realized through partnering, outsourcing, or



deferring to another provider of a service and/or facility.

Easements: This revenue source is available when the city allows utility companies, businesses, or individuals to develop an improvement below ground on its property for a set period of time and a set dollar amount, which is received by the city annually.

Equipment Rental: The revenue source is available when equipment such as tables, chairs, tents, stages, bicycles, roller blades, and other items are rented and used for recreation.

Entertainment Tax: This tax is on ticket sales for major entertainment venues such as concert facilities, golf tournaments or sporting events. This tax is based on the earnings vendors receive from their ticket sales.

Establish a Designated License Plate for Parks: This funding mechanism can be used to finance improvements or programs in the state or city.

Foundation/Gifts: These dollars—raised from tax-exempt, non-profit organizations—are established with private donations to promote specific causes, activities, or issues. They offer a variety of opportunities to fund capital projects such as capital campaigns, gift catalogs, fund-raisers, endowments, sales of items, etc.

Grants: A variety of special grants either currently exist through the federal and state government systems or will be established during the life of current and proposed facilities.

Greenway Utility: When greenway utilities are established, they are used to finance the acquisition of greenways and greenway development by selling the development rights underground for fiber-optic types of businesses.

Intermodal Transportation and Efficiency Act: This funding program, commonly called TEA-21 Grants, was originally authorized (and subsequently renewed) by the federal government in 1991. Funds are distributed through the state. There are several million dollars in enhancement revenues available for transportation-related projects such as bicycle and pedestrian trails, rail depot rehabilitation, landscaping, and beautification projects. These projects typically take three to five years to reach the construction stage.

Irrevocable Remainder Trusts: These trusts are set up with individuals who typically have more than a million dollars in wealth. These people will leave a portion of their wealth to the city in a trust fund that allows the fund to grow over time; the city can use a portion of the interest to support specific park and recreation facilities or programs designated by the trustee.

Land Trust: Many communities have developed land trusts to help secure and fund the cost of acquiring land that needs to be preserved and protected for open space and greenway purposes. This could be a good source for acquiring future land.



Land and Water Conservation Fund: These funds are awarded through the National Park Service and state park system for acquiring and developing parks, recreation, and supporting facilities.

Licensing Rights: This revenue source allows the department/city to license its name on all resale items that private or public vendors use when they sell clothing or other items containing the name of the department/city. The typical licensing fee is 6 percent to 10 percent of the cost of the resale item.

Life Estates: This source of money is available when a person wants to leave his or her property to the city in exchange for living on the property until his or her death. Before the person's death, the city usually can use a portion of the property for park purposes; all of it can be used for parks after a person's death. This revenue source is very popular for individuals with a lot of wealth because their estates will be taxed greatly upon their death, and their children will likely have to sell this property because of probate costs. This opportunity, which allows the individual to receive a fair tax deduction annually on the property while leaving a life estate, is good for the city because it does not have to pay for the land.

Merchandising Sales: This revenue source comes from the public or private sector on resale items from gift shops and pro shops for either all sales or a set gross percentage.

Naming Rights: Many cities and counties have begun selling the naming rights for new buildings or renovations of existing buildings and parks to cover the associated development cost.

Parking Fee: This fee applies to parking at selected destination facilities such as beach parking areas, major stadiums, and other attractions to help offset capital and operational costs.

Permits (Special-Use Permits): These special permits allow individuals to use specific park property for financial gain. The city either receives a set amount of money or a percentage from the gross service revenues.

Private Developers: These developers lease space from city-owned land through a subordinate lease that pays out a set dollar amount plus a percentage of gross dollars for recreation enhancements. These leases could be for restaurants, sports complexes, equestrian facilities, and recreation centers and ice arenas.

Recreation Service Fees: These are dedicated user fees, established by a local ordinance or other government procedures, for constructing and maintaining recreation facilities. Fees can apply to all organized activities that require some type of reservation or to some other purpose as defined by the local government. Examples of such activities include adult basketball, volleyball, and softball leagues; youth baseball, soccer, and softball leagues; and special-interest classes. The fee gives participants the opportunity to contribute to the upkeep of facilities being used.

Rental Car Tax: This tax is designated for land acquisition purposes. Some cities and counties have used a percentage of rental car taxes to support land acquisition or park improvements.



Special Fund-Raisers: Many park and recreation agencies have special fund-raisers annually to help cover specific programs and capital projects.

Ticket Sales/Admissions: This revenue source is based on accessing facilities for self-directed activities (e.g., pools, skateboard parks, ropes course, ballparks and entertainment activities). These user fees help offset operational costs.

Utility Roundup Programs: Some park and recreation agencies have worked with their local utilities to set up a program that allows a consumer to "round up" the consumer's actual utility invoice to the nearest dollar; revenues are dedicated to parks and recreation.



Responsibility

Responsibilities for implementing this plan are outlined in the following table. This plan will require collaboration between City departments, other State and local agencies, affiliated agencies and the business community.

The Level of Importance for each Plan Action is also provided in the table. Since many of the actions are interrelated, no prioritization or specific timeframe for implementation of each action is suggested here. However, the Plan Themes are presented in the order they were prioritized through the plan's public engagement process, and therefore inherently suggest an order of public priority.



Table 7: Plan Responsibilities & Priorities

Actions	Elected Officials	City Park Staff	Other City Staff	GRG	Business Community	Level of Importance (1, 2, or 3)
Plan Theme: Quality						
Base-Line Funding		■				1
Define Maintenance Backlog		■				1
Address Maintenance Backlog		■				1
■ Park Facilities						
■ Recreation Centers						
■ Comfort Stations						
■ Other Buildings						
Capital Renewal		■				1
Preventative Maintenance		■				2
Design Standards		■				1
Plan Theme: Safety						
Safety in Design		■	■			2
■ Layout						
■ Signage						
■ Lighting						
Park Watch	■	■	■			1
Crime Watch		■	■			1
Park Ranger Patrols		■	■			2
Volunteer Patrols	■	■	■			1
Park Cleanup		■	■			1
Uniformed Staff		■				2
Emergency Comm. (Staff)		■	■			1
Emergency Comm. (Public)		■	■			2
Plan Theme: Stewardship						
Partnership Options	■	■	■	■	■	2
Parks and Schools	■	■	■			2
Parks and Businesses	■	■	■		■	1
Parks and Developers	■	■	■		■	1
Parks and Not-for-Profits	■	■	■	■		2
Volunteer Office		■	■			1
Friends of Parks		■	■			2
Parks Board		■				3
Cooperation Agreements	■	■	■	■		3



Actions	Elected Officials	City Park Staff	Other City Staff	GRG	Business Community	Level of Importance (1, 2, or 3)
Plan Theme: Balance						
Park Standards						
Typical Elements		■	■			1
Reclassify Parks		■				1
Park Improvements						
Capital Improvements	■	■				See Vol. 2
Funding Park Improvements	■	■	■			1
Park Clusters		■	■			3
Park Expansions						
Strategic Land Use Parks	■	■	■		■	2
New City Parks						
Filling Gaps	■	■	■			2
■ Parks in Redevelopment Areas						
■ School Parks						
■ The Lid						
■ Shop and Play						
Acquisition Strategy	■	■	■			2
■ Acquisition Criteria						
■ Acquisition Techniques						
Park Divesting						
Lease/Donate/Sell	■	■	■			1
Recreation Centers						
Indoor Recreation	■	■	■			1
Plan Theme: Nature						
Environmental Management						
Design						
■ Sustainable Design		■	■	■		1
Streams						
■ Restore Streams		■	■	■		3
■ Daylight Streams		■	■	■		3
Wetlands						
■ Restore Wetlands		■	■	■		2
■ Wetland Mitigation		■	■	■		2



Actions	Elected Officials	City Park Staff	Other City Staff	GRG	Business Community	Level of Importance (1, 2, or 3)
Storm Water						
■ Non-Structural Management		■	■			1
■ Infiltration-Based Management		■	■			2
■ Erosion Control		■	■			1
Forests						
■ Forest Inventory		■	■			1
■ Forest Restoration		■	■			2
■ Forest Invasive Species		■	■			3
■ Forest Enhancement		■	■			3
■ Tree City		■	■			1
Grasslands						
■ Grassland Inventories		■	■			1
■ Grassland Invasive Species		■	■			2
■ Grassland Restoration and Enhancement		■	■			3
Protection						
■ Habitat Protection		■	■			3
Open Space						
Green Streets		■	■	■		3
Open Space Acquisition		■	■	■		2
Native Birds		■	■	■		2
Open Space and Urban Redevelopment	■	■	■	■		2
Infrastructure Corridors	■	■	■	■		2
Gateway Mall	■	■	■	■		1
Community Gardens						
Private Community Gardens		■	■			1
Retain Active LRA Gardens in Neighborhood Preservation Areas		■	■			1
Evaluate Active LRA Gardens in Neighborhood Devpt. Areas		■	■			2
LRA Garden Potential	■	■	■			3
Inactive LRA Gardens	■	■	■			3



Actions	Elected Officials	City Park Staff	Other City Staff	GRG	Business Community	Level of Importance (1, 2, or 3)
Plan Theme: Value						
Property Values		■	■			2
Proximity to Neighborhoods	■	■	■			2
Encourage Connectivity		■	■	■		2
Promote Economic Development and Tourism	■	■	■	■	■	1
Expand Access for Tourists		■		■	■	2
Marketing Office		■				2
Plan Theme: Heritage						
Cultural Resources Inventory		■	■			1
Preservation Strategies		■	■			2
Interpretive Programs		■	■			2
Staff Training		■	■			2
Links to Neighborhoods		■	■			2
Acceptance Criteria		■	■			2
Plan Theme: Connectivity						
Greenways						
Greenway Liaison		■				1
River Ring		■		■		1
Forest Ring		■		■		1
Chouteau Greenway		■	■	■	■	1
North/South Greenway		■	■	■		2
Local Greenways	■	■	■	■		2
Tree Lawns		■				2
Trails and Bikeways						
Bicycle and Pedestrian Routes	■	■	■			2
Trailheads		■	■	■		3
Mass Transit		■				3
Boulevards and Parkways						
Boulevards and Parkways	■	■	■			3

